

GIORGIONE

A

TRAGEDY.

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Giorgione, the painter of Venice; a trage



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THE following Plays, by the author of "Giorgione," will be issued in the order in which they were written; namely:—

VOL.

- I. GIORGIONE, the Painter of Venice. A Tragedy.
- II. HENRY VIII.; or, Two Proverbs Verified. A Comedy.
- III. LOVE ONE ANOTHER; or, the Old House on Chevin.
A Drama.
- IV. KATHLEEN O'MORE; or, the Pledge of Love. A Drama.
- V. CEDRIC, THE GREYBEARD; or, the Saxon Conspiracy.
A Tragedy.
- VI. THE MISER OF MARSEILLES. A Tragedy.
- VII. MARIETTA ROBUSTI: a Tale of the Tintoretto. A
Tragedy.
- VIII. ELIZABETH. A Tragedy.
- IX. MARY STUART. A Tragedy.
- X. ANNE BOLEYN, Second Queen Consort of Henry VIII.
A Tragedy.
- XI. KATHERINE HOWARD, Fifth Queen Consort of Henry
VIII. A Tragedy.
- XII. BERNARD PALISSY, THE POTTER; or, the Huguenot
Lovers. A Tragedy.

Actors and Managers desirous of mounting Mr. Walker's Plays, may obtain information regarding them, by addressing their communications to him at Utica, N. Y., or to

J. W. FEETER, Esq., *Attorney,*

128 BROADWAY, N. Y.

WALKER'S PLAYS.

VOL. I.



GIORGIONE, THE PAINTER OF VENICE.



"To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,
To raise the genins, and to mend the heart;
To make mankind, in conscious virtue bold,
Live o'er each scene, and be what they behold:
For this, the tragic muse first trod the stage,
Commanding tears to stream through every age;
Tyrants no more their savage nature kept,
And foes to virtue wondered how they wept."

POPE.

"Bold is the man ! who, in this nicer age,
Presumes to tread the chaste, corrected stage ;
Now, with gay tinsel arts we can no more
Conceal the want of Nature's sterling ore."

JAMES THOMSON.

PREFACE TO THE PLAYS.

YEARS have been buried by their father Time,
Wherein I had some hours aside from toil
Set down for leisure, pleasure, and repose.
They were devoted, I say mainly so,
To fashioning the framework of some plays,
Where bold invention and internal worth
Would show that moral beauty was and is
The best part of a man.

I fashioned them for actors, *honest* men ;
Not for those puppets who dress up for show,
Who speak no sentence worth remembering.
I fashioned them for those who love the art
Which Thespis followed in the days of yore.
I fashioned them for those who make the feast
A thing to be remembered by their guests
When years grow hoary — those who make the
feast
With honest things, — things for the intellect,
Besides the glare of costly dining ware, —
Things cousin to the soul's delight and love.

I did not make them for the sake of show :—
For, look you, neighbors, what's a splendid show
Of chandeliers, of golden goblets, China-ware,
To those who come expecting goodly things
Inside the dishes ? things to please the eye
And satisfy the cravings of the soul ?
Think you, how they swear, how grow dissatisfied
When introduced to Splendor's dining hall,
Whereto they're welcomed by a smiling form —
A fawning form, obsequious, at your will,
And robed in costly fabrics ; garnished, too,
With gems that dazzle and enchant the eye
With oriental glow ? Welcomed to the hall
Where Grandeur hath been busy, at her best
To make the scene imposing ? Where the lie
Is plainly seen behind the flimsy veil
Of all the glare ? Would you, good neighbors, pray,
If hungry you should come invited guests
And leave with glitter, not with honest fare ?
I'll answer for you ; truly, you *would* swear !

I made these plays to entertain the crowds
Which nightly gather at the sev'ral shows ;
I sought to reach them by the Thespian voice,
To lead them on to beauty, grace, and light ;
To yearn for that perfection of the heart
Itself approves — the confidence of love.
It was not that the old plays had decayed,
Which made me seize the pen and scribble more ;

Nor that their merit languished, did not please ;
Nor that the pinnacle of Excellence
Was left for me (*I need your pardon here,*
For I can hardly hope to occupy
The cellar floor). The great souls of the past,
And those rich-gifted of the present time,
Will never lose their beauty, lustre, light,
While men inhabit this grand universe.

The greedy masses look for something new.—
They care not to be fed with food to-day,
The like of which they had but yesterday ;
And they who cater for this appetite
Should be men of the soundest principles,
Should be alive to every passing wave
Or trembling of the hungry atmosphere,
Should catch the very essence of the deep
And cram it down the maw they seek to fill.

These plays were well considered, plots devised,
Ere words flew from my pen. Before a stone
Could be hewn into shape, a timber framed,
The architect must furnish his design.
'Twas here the labor 'gan ; and here it was
The sweat of fear assailed him ; here it was
He trembled in the presence of the need
Which clearly stood before him ; here he saw
That every artifice at his command
Was needed for the work he had in hand.

To gain th' applause of various-hearted men
He must appeal — must lead them by his light
To beauty, duty, and humanity.
And when the building 'gan to climb the air
How proud was he! And how his pride in-
creased,
As from the corner to the coping-stone
He followed it; though doubting if 'twould please
Himself when finished, or the public soul.

He did not build to pander to the base,
Whose morals are already in the mire —
Who love the sludge and stench of indolence —
Who set at naught the efforts made for them
And their salvation: No, but he invites,
Not only those who are reputed fair,
But every one, to come upon the land
Where flowers bloom, and where the way is clear
Towards the grand completion of the law —
“Love God and one another.” That's his sign!

The men and women that I introduce,
Have been selected from the motley crowds
Which gained admittance to my studio.
To fill their places in the sev'r'al plays
I set them down. You'll see that I have sought
The aid of Nature and the force of Art
To give them tone, to clearly separate
The gross ingredients, and personify.

And what they utter, will be recognized
As humanizing, rather than design
To carve a monument for villainy.
I have not clothed them in vulgarity,
To catch the license of the malcontents,
Who shout applause, admire, and emulate
The misdirected genius of the stage.

But then I find it is no easy thing,
To gain admittance to the managers,
Or to the actors whom I care to know,
And whose opinions would command respect.
Yet who can blame them for their reticence?
Are authors not a crowd of *reckless* men?
Do they not watch the actor's every step?
Do they not stalk before him and behind?
Turn as he will, does he not hear a voice
Proclaiming such great things were ne'er before
Set down by man? (*I'm in the crowd, I swear!*)
What satisfaction can the actor find,
When in the tangled forest of a play
He gets confused? How can he see his way,
Where action, matter, color, time, and place,
Are badly jumbled? How may he escape?
Nay, is it possible to be at ease
In such a muddle? Pardon, if they swear!

It may be that my plays will disappear,
For want of action, matter — unity;

Or that the list already is too full.
If that should be the case, must I complain?
Must I complain, e'en though I labored long
And earnestly, that they might win regard
If not more lasting and deserved renown?
Though I may never see the curtain rise —
Though I may never see the men advance,
That grew into my verse, nor the women
Who live of my creation, — would *that* be strange?
Not very strange! the thing's not new with me!
For men with grander souls and nobler hearts,
Whose muse was like a queen to my poor
wench,
Whose muse exceeded mine so far indeed
That I may never hope to reach the steep
Whereon they stand, returned to mother-dust
Ere they were recognized, regarded, known.
Were they not subject to a thousand fears?
Was not ambition often mortified?
Pride often pierced? And yet they shine to-day,
And will continue so for ages more.
Then let me hope that my lot may be fair,
That Time will show this work of mine to men
For their applause, commiseration, love.
“*O that is egotistical!*” you say.
Well, *I* am human, therefore pardon me,
Your servant, sirs,

THE AUTHOR.

Walker's Plays, Vol. 1.

GIORGIONE,

THE

PAINTER OF VENICE.

A Tragedy

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

ALFRED WALKER.

—

GIORGIONE, BORN, A.D. 1478; DIED, A.D. 1511.

"He was as far 'bove common men
As a sun-steed, wild-eyed and meteor-maned,
Neighing the reeling stars, is 'bove a hack
With sluggish veins of mnd."

ALEXANDER SMITH.

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To

THE ACTOR, THE GENTLEMAN, THE MAN
OF NOBLE SOUL,

WHOSE VALOR, PASSION, PRIDE, EXALTED HIS PROFESSION,

AND MADE IT HONORABLE;

WHO NOBLY WON THE LAUREL WHICH HE WEARS;

THAT HE MAY LONG ADORN THE HISTRIONIC ART

IS THE WISH OF THE THOUSANDS

WHO HAVE HEARD HIM READ

GREAT SHAKESPEARE'S SUBLIME VERSE:

THE AUTHOR OF THIS PLAY

OFFERS IT,

FRATERNALLY,

A TRIBUTE TO THE EXCELLENCE AND EMINENCE

OF

EDWIN BOOTH.

SOURCE OF THE PLOT.

SOURCE OF THE PLOT.

GIORGIONE, BORN, A. D. 1478; DIED A. D. 1511.

"This painter was another great *inventor*, one of those who stamped his own individuality on his art. He was essentially a poet, and a *subjective* poet, who fused his own being with all he performed and created. If Raphael be the Shakespeare, then Giorgione may be styled the Byron, of painting.

"He was born at Castel Franco, a small town in the territory of Treviso; and his proper name was Giorgio Barberelli. Nothing is known of his family, or of his younger years, except that having shown a strong disposition to art he was brought, when a boy, to Venice, and placed under the tuition of Gian Bellini.

"As he grew up, he was distinguished by his tall, noble figure, and the dignity of his deportment, and his companions called him Giorgione, or George the Great, by which nickname he has, after the Italian fashion, descended to posterity.

"Giorgione appears to have been endowed by nature with an intense love of beauty, and a sense of harmony which pervaded his whole being. He was famous as a player and composer on the lute, to which he sang his own verses.

"In his works two characteristics prevail, sentiment and color; both tinged by the peculiar temperament of the man: the sentiment is noble, but melancholy; and the color decided, intense, and glowing. He had a freedom, a careless mastery of hand, unknown before his time.

"It is to be regretted, that of one so interesting in his character and his works, we know so little; yet more to be regretted that a

being so gifted with the passionate sensibility of a poet should have been employed chiefly in decorative painting, and that too confined to the outsides of the Venetian palaces. These creations of art have been destroyed by fire, ruined by time, or effaced by the damps of the Lagnne. He appears to have early acquired fame in his art, and we find him in 1504 employed, together with Titian, in painting with frescoes the exterior of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi (the Hall of Exchange belonging to the German merchants). That part intrusted to Giorgione he covered with the most beautiful and poetical figures; but the significance of the whole was soon after the artist's death forgotten. Vasari tells us that in his time no one could interpret it; it appears to have been a sort of arabesque on a colossal scale.

"Giorgione delighted in fresco as a vehicle, because it gave him ample scope for that largeness and freedom of outline which characterized his manner; unhappily, of his numerous works, only the merest fragments remain. We have no evidence that he exercised his art elsewhere than at Venice, or that he ever resided outside of the Venetian territory; in his works the heads, hands, features, costumes, are all stamped with the Venetian character. He had no school, though, induced by his social and affectionate nature, he freely imparted what he knew, and often worked in conjunction with others. His love of music, and his love of pleasure, sometimes led him astray from his art, but were oftener his inspirers: both are embodied in his pictures, particularly his exquisite pastorals and concerts, over which, however, he has breathed that cast of thoughtfulness and profound feeling which, in the midst of harmony and beauty, is like a revelation or a prophecy of sorrow. All the rest of what is recorded concerning the life and death of Giorgione may be told in a few words. Among the painters who worked with him was Pietro Lazzo, of Feltri, near Venice, known in the history of art as Morto da Feltri, and mentioned by Vasari as the inventor, or rather reviver of arabesque painting in the antique style, which he had studied among the dark vaults of the Roman ruins. This Morto, as Ridolfi relates, was the friend of Giorgione, and lived under the same roof with him. He took advantage of Giorgione's confidence to seduce and carry off from his house a girl whom he passionately loved.

Wounded doubly by the falsehood of his mistress and the treachery of his friend, Giorgione sunk into despair and soon afterwards died, at the early age of thirty-three. Morto da Feltri afterwards fled from Venice, entered the army, and was killed at the battle of Zara, in 1519. Such is the Venetian tradition.

"His portraits are magnificent. They have all, with the strongest resemblance to general nature, a grand ideal cast, for it was in the character of the man to idealize everything he touched. Very few of his portraits are now to be identified. Among the finest and most interesting, may be mentioned his own portrait in the Munich Gallery, which has an expression of the profoundest melancholy. In the Imperial Gallery at Venice — rich in his works — there is a picture representing a young man covered with a garland of vine-leaves; another comes behind him with a concealed dagger, and appears to watch the moment to strike; the expression of the two heads can never be forgotten by those who have looked upon them. The fine portrait of a cavalier with a page riveting his armor, is well known; it is in the possession of the Earl of Carlisle, and styled, though without much probability, Gaston de Foix. A beautiful full-length figure in armor, now in the collection of Mr. Rogers, bears the same name, and is probably a study for a St. Michael or a St. George. Lord Byron has celebrated in some beautiful lines the impression made on his mind by a picture in the Manfrini Palace, Venice; but the poet errs in styling it the 'Portraits of his son, and wife, and self.' Giorgione never had either son or wife. The picture alluded to represents a Venetian lady, a cavalier, and a page — portraits evidently, but the names are unknown.

"The striking characteristics of all Giorgione's pictures, whether portraits, ideal heads, or compositions, is the ineffaceable impression they leave on the memory — the impression of reality. In the apparent simplicity of the means through which this effect is produced, the few yet splendid colors, the vigorous decision of touch, the depth and tenderness of the sentiment, they remind us of the old religious music to which we have listened in the Italian churches — a few simple notes, long drawn, deliciously blended, swelling into a rich, full, and perfect harmony, and melting into the soul.

"The difference between Giorgione and Titian as colorists, appears to be this, that the colors of Giorgione appear as if lighted from within, and those of Titian as if lighted from without. The epithet of *fiery* or *glowing* would apply to Giorgione; the epithet of *golden* would express the predominant hues of Titian."

Merrifield's "Lives of the Painters."

"A picture by Giorgione
 Whose tints are truth and beauty at their best;
 And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
 That picture (however fine the rest)
 Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
 It may be also to your zest,
 And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so;
 'Tis but a portrait of his son, and wife,
 And self; but such a woman! love in life!
 Love in full life and length, not love ideal,
 No, nor ideal beauty, that fine name,
 But something better still, so very real,
 That the sweet model must have been the same:
 A thing that you would purchase, beg, or steal,
 'Wer't not impossible, besides a shame:
 The face recalls some face, as 'twere with pain,
 You once have seen, but ne'er will see again;
 One of those forms which flit by us, when we
 Are young, and fix our eyes on every face;
 And, oh! the loveliness at times we see
 In momentary gliding, the soft grace,
 The youth, the bloom, the beauty which agree,
 In many a nameless being we retrace,
 Whose course and home we know not, nor shall know,
 Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below."

Byron.

"I know nothing of pictures myself and care about as little; but to me there are none like the Venetian—above all Giorgione. I remember his 'Judgment of Solomon,' in the Mariscalchi Gallery in Bologna. The real mother is beautiful, exquisitely beautiful!"

Byron's "Letters," 1820.

AUTHOR'S ADDRESS.

AUTHOR'S ADDRESS.

I AM no Shakespeare, nor do I presume
To borrow from his excellence my cue.
I wear no mantle which the bard left off;
Nor dare I venture to walk after him
In his great footprints, lest his ghost appear,
And like "the majesty of buried Denmark," tell
Some tale to fright my blood. But I may bend
To his great merit; I may doff my cap
And reverence the name of Avon's bard.
Time hath not borne upon his fleeting wings
The name of Shakespeare to oblivion;
But Fame hath blown it through her trumpet-
tongue
To nations far and wide. And in the years
Which are unnumbered in the throes of Time,
His name will be revered; still will the crowd
Which Thespis leads, aspire to eminence
By the majesty of his wit.

I come not with a Roman great in arms,
Browned in the service of the commonwealth;

I bring no statesman, like old Richelien,
To outwit treason, and protect the state ;
I'll show no savage Tarquin, Borgia, or Macbeth,
Nor Timon, Richard, or the jealous Moor,
To rant before you, — I've another aim.
I bring before you one of gentle mould,
A man whose merit should be known to you ;
A painter — one who had a poet's soul,
Was earnest, honest, super-excellent,
Magnanimous as man, noble in love,
And dignified by that grand principle,
A grateful heart — a condescending soul.

I have been in a garden, one most fair, —
A garden which the histrionic hosts
Have much neglected, or may not have known.
I found a flower, which, by its beauty,
Attracted my attention, and it grew
Into my love. I treasured it with care,
Because it was a rare one, excellent ;
A thing of beauty glowing in the light
Of summer life, of dignity and love ;
A thing that could not bear the freezing touch
Of discord, ignorance, dishonesty.

“*A painter?*” Yes; and that you may admire
His noble soul, his passion for his art,
His hopes, his aims, his pride, his excellence,
He comes before you, — pray you, know him
well !

“*A painter?*” Yes; but why do you repeat?
As if some strange adventure was in hand?
“*Painters are so common?*” Sirs, let me speak!
And know you this, that *I* speak *knowingly*,
That he who would unite himself to Art
Must live with her and love, and never stray.
Within the precincts of his studio,
However poor in purse his lot may be,
His soul is rich and fair, and sweet, and high.
Though his condition may be desperate,
His purse untenanted, his stomach crave,
That he may die before his name can live
Or men regard him,— he *must* persevere,
For Hope is plethoric with promises
Of laureled-greatness; and he must not fail,
But strive and strain for Immortality.

Some years ago, while busy at my work —
Painting a picture of some famous men,
Whom Venice held as honorably great —
I thought how seldom men esteemed in Art
Were made to walk the stage and fret their
hours —
Nay, I had never heard of such a thing!
And I might well believe there was no play,
Wherein one of those men was made to move
As he lived inwardly. “Suppose *I* write!”
“But how?” said I. “*I* am not qualified!
I know but little of the mysteries

Of composition — was a dunce at school —
And my employments have not mended me!"
"A strange conceit!" Yet while I thought of it
My name was called. I plainly heard a voice
Down in the recess of my wond'ring soul,
"Where there is a will there is a way! Write!"
"Did I dream?" No, Ridolphi came to me,
And by his side, that interesting man,
Giorgione, he who loved his art,
And was a painter-poet. They volunteered
To aid me in the work. "Well, well," said I,
"I'll set down what you say and think of it!"
Some virgin leaves I wedded to the *plot*,
Then with some other papers on the shelf
In my retreat I carefully bestowed them,
That I might work them out with proper care
And due elaboration. So far, all was well.

But Enterprise attracted my desire,
And Commerce promised to increase my store
If I would join the army which she led.
I followed her; and I fought fearlessly
On doubtful days, through many hard campaigns,
While dust grew thick upon my promises —
Those left in my retreat: so years passed by.

A cloud came o'er my life: — a sad affair,
Heart-rending, crushing, and most terrible,
Happening in my house to one most near

And dear to me left me unfit to work
 As I proposed — for I was lonely here,
 And all the world was empty to my heart.¹
 No wonder, then, the plot-leaves slept secure
 Beneath their dusty covering in my room ;
 They might have been forgotten for all time.

One day, while rummaging among my things —
 “ What's here ? My plot ? Well, I declare !
 If you lie longer here you'll rust away,
 And how shall I excuse my promises
 Made long ago ? ” “ *Write ! write !* ” the voice re-
 plied.

“ But how ? I have no time that I can spare !
 My business growing greater every day,
 And more extensive, needs my every care ! ”
 “ *Write ! write !* ” the voice continued ; “ *Write !*
write ! write ! ”

I ventured slowly, for the way was rough.
 Though trodden well by others, 'twas to me
 Most roughly strewn with matter not akin,
 Which made the journey trying, painful, long.
 A thousand questions, workmen here and there,
 Business, perplexities, and demands,
 Before I could accomplish fifty lines,
 Would try the patience of a very Job.
 Then think of *me*, a man not *blessed* like Job !

¹ The insanity and death of a beloved wife.

These were the thorns and flints that made the
way
So long and doubtful, painful and depressed.

But I kept on through fair and foul report ;
I had determined that I would go through,
Would see the end, though I might never gain
A mill for all my pains. This my resolve,
I buckled on my sword and marched along ;
And I at last rejoicing gained the end.
'Twas labor that I loved — weaving the web ;
With love I send it out — though doubtingly,
If it will please you as it pleases me.

But come, kind patrons, come along with me,
And as we journey onward through the play,
You'll see this painter as my fancy paints
And plot demands — see how he truly loved —
How he unselfish died. And Pity, sirs,
Entering the chamber of your sympathies,
Will ask you for a tear, to keep alive
The sweet remembrance of Corielli's love.

PERSONS^{*} IN THE PLAY.

GIAN BELLINI, a Painter.
GIORGIO BARBERELLI, called GIORGIONE.
BARTOLO LORINI, a Senator.
ARETINO, foster-brother of GIORGIONE.
MORTO DA FELTRI.
TIZIANO VECCELLI, called TITIAN.
SEBASTIAN ZUCCATO, a rich Venetian.
MESSENGER.
HOST.
USHER.
CORIELLI, daughter of BELLINI.
VIOLANTA, daughter of LORINI.
MAIDS to VIOLANTA.
LORDS, LADIES, CITIZENS, etc.

GIORGIONE,
Born, A. D. 1478; died, A. D. 1511.

ACT I.

SCENE.—TREVISO AND VERONA.

“ His own heart
Made him a poet. Yesterday to him
Was richer far than fifty years to come.
Alchemist Memory turned his past to gold.”

ALEXANDER SMITH.

GIORGIONE,
THE PAINTER OF VENICE.

ACT I.

SCENE.—TREVISO AND VERONA.

SCENE I.—*The Hills of Treviso. A Rocky Landscape. Time—Evening, and during a Thunder-storm.*

MORTO DA FELTRI (*without*).

WHAT—ho! What—ho! help! help! What—
ho! help! help!

Enter MORTO DA FELTRI.

MORTO.

I am weary, way-worn, and despairing!
And in this rocky-wild I no shelter find.
The lightning's potent flame divides the rocks,
The rocks that stood unharmed by passing storms
As ages gathered in the lap of Time.
The thunder roars, and rolls along the steep

Intensified by Echo's angry cries.
 The clouds relieved, the mountain streams enlarge
 Beyond my fording. While the winds are free,
 And howling, shrieking, fiercely pass me by.
 Here Solitude, folding her weird-like wings,
 Envelops me; and Night, fast to my side,
 Comes with her cold embrace. O Destiny !
 If 'tis thy will that I must perish here
 I will submit; yet will I curse the race
 That brought this woe to me.—
 'Tis balsam to my soul's dismemberment !
 My limbs their office fail :— shall I, to Fate,
 Resign my sinking heart ? Let her decide,
 If I upon this bank, unpitied, must expire !

[*Falls on a bank.*

Help — ho ! another effort — What — ho ! help !
 The hills but echo to my misery !

[*Faints.*

Enter Giorgio.

GIGRGIG.

I heard a cry, as of one needing help ! —

[*Discovers Morto.*

What's here ! a man ! exhausted — perhaps dead !

[*Examines the body.*

The heart beats ; slowly, yet there is motion.

The vital spark is yet a tenant here.

What shall I do ? My flask — aye, here it is !

Come, come, he must not perish, he must live !

[*Giorgio gives drink to Morto, and the latter revives*

How is it with thee, friend? better? — softly!
'Twere well I chanced this way and heard thy
call,
Or 'ere the morning dawned upon the hills,
Thy body would have been a lifeless thing
For birds and beasts of prey. Have courage,
friend!

[*Morto sighs.*

O why so care-encumbered on the hills?
That heavy heart of thine gives liberty
To full-breathed sighs. Have courage, friend!

MORTO.

O yes, my heart is heavy, sorrowful,
And weary of itself. O my hard fate!
Exhausted nature, not mine own desire,
Looked here to leap into the gulf of night —
The never-ending night; and yonder sun,
Now hidden by the hills, would not return
With day to me, — *my night would never end.*
O woe, O woe is mine! O woe is mine!
That I to misery am again recalled!

[*He covers his face and weeps.*

GIORGIO.

To die! weary of life! Why covet death?
Thy body's but the casket of thy soul;
And Heaven gave thy soul the power to rise
To its perfection, to exalt itself.

Thy body from thy father came to thee,
Thy soul from Heaven, neither to be used
Despairingly, nor recklessly destroyed.

It is not manly so to cast it off;
And to that Love which guides the Universe,
Whose Will all Heaven sways, it is a crime;
It is both insult and ingratitude.

And 'tis the very depth of cowardice,
To check the springs of life rather than meet
Opposing fortune, which, encountered well
And conquered nobly by a bold advance,
Is found to be a boggle, not a bear.
The lofty soul delights to conquer it,
To triumph on the ruin of its foe.
But whither art thou bound?

MORTO.

To Verona.

GIORGIO.

Thou art exhausted, and cannot proceed;
So in my hut thou shall repose awhile.
Lean on my arm — I'm strong! — and to shelter
I'll guide thee. 'Tis poor, but thou art welcome;
And when thy inclination would proceed
Towards Verona, I will lead the way.
Cheerily, cheerily! Lean on my arm!

MORTO.

While I am holpen, all that I can give
Is barren gratitude.

GIORGIO.

That shall satisfy me !

MORTO.

But I am weak ; alone, I cannot move !

GIORGIO.

Nay, then, I'll carry thee ! 'Twould be a sin,
Both in the sight of Heaven and my soul,
To leave thee here to perish all alone.
Cheerily, cheerily ! Here, drink again !

[*He gives Morto drink.*

MORTO.

Thanks, thanks ! Proceed !

GIORGIO.

Cheer ! cheer ! lean on my arm !

[*Giorgio leads Morto off the stage.*

SCENE II.—*Interior of a Shepherd's Hut—Morning. Giorgio, Aretino, and Morto da Feltri.*

GIORGIO.

If to the city of old Verona,
Thine inclination will not brook delay,
Then I will guide thee; or, if 'tis better
In thy decision to remain with us,
We will receive thee as a brother here,
And make thee equal owner with ourselves
In what we here possess.

ARETINO.

I pray thee, stay!
We'll try our best to make it pleasant here!

MORTO.

A mountain life would not conform to me.
The busy hives, where toiling men contrive
The things which their necessities require,
Have had my study, talent, and desire.
If I abandon what I understand,
And what my nature, inclination, love,
Pronounces proper to my qualities,

I don a foreign robe — nay, I am a clown,
Taking a chance-road, when I might pursue
The well-defined and direct way to gain
Dame Fortune's favors. I was born 'mong toil,
And toil will have to be my portion here.

GIORGIO.

Toil ! is it toil that binds thee to the world ?
Or is it for th' embellishment of man ?
Th' improvement of thy fellows ? or, thy soul
To greater, holier, sublimer purposes ?
Had thou, a shepherd, lived upon the hills —
Those hills which stand as monuments of Time,
Enjeweling our native Italy —
Those hills which get Apollo's lusty kiss,
As from the glowing East he drives grim Night
And its myrmidons hence, while yet the vale
Sleeps undisturbed below — and gifted been
With soul to see the glory everywhere,
Thy love had been as loud as this of mine.
The sun, arising — such perceptions thine
Of Heaven's goodness and sublime design,
Would swell thy soul to overflowing praise ;
Then, as the day grew old, thy thoughts would dwell
Upon His mercy ; and when evening came,
Thine own dependence and infirmity
Would draw thy soul to trust to Heaven's Love.
The anthem which great Nature hath composed
She would rehearse to thee, ravishing thy soul

With sublime harmony, till resounding
Throughout the wide vault of the azure sky
The Light of Heaven would be clear to thee.
The seasons, revolving from year to year,
Would, as they came, discover thy good heart,
And in their passing leave it much improved.
The infant Spring with smiles and promises
Would wind about thee with his sweet embrace,
And lead thee in high glee to feel again
Thine own sweet childhood, that dear sunny
time.

Then Summer glorious, like a maiden crowned
Just from the altar and a virgin wife,
Would draw thy soul away from stolid things
To her dear presence; she would lead thee forth
Upon her verdant carpets, which are flecked
With precious things and sweet — gems glowing,
rich,
Which should not be compared with that dull
gold
Which men strive to possess — I mean that gold
Which for itself alone men sacrifice
All hope of Heaven, all respect of men.
But growing in thine heart the love of God,
Things which were common in thy boyish days,
The wild-flowers of the mountain — O look! look!
They are not common! See the grandeur there!
The handiwork of God! The grand display
Thy admiration would make plethoric,

And new delight in every fresh advance
Would find no end to marvel or to love.
Then Autumn, tinted with Apollo's dyes,
Bending beneath his load of precious things
For man and beast to live — the perfect love,
The gift of Nature, *from all Nature's God!*
What shall I say of Winter? for he comes
Shivering with cold. Look! he hath jewels
Like diamonds and pearls depending from his
beard,
Which the savage North hath iced from his
breath;
Though cold without there is a glow within!
O, I have sat before a blazing fire
On a winter night gazing intently
Upon the curling flame as high it leaped,
And heard its music as it passed away
Into the dome of night!
My soul estranged by tiny spirit forms
From things substantial lived in Fairyland,
And saw the gambols of the elfin crowd
That peopled all the realm. And as I sat,
Myself forgetting, I did not heed the storm
That loudly reveled in the outside air,
The charm was so complete and powerful.
I love my mountain home! I love my life!
Had thy lot been as mine, with equal love
Enveloping thy soul, thy praise would rise,
And be as constant as the needle's point

Is northward to the pole — the seaman's guide
To safely land his cargo. I so love
My life, the hills, all nature, Nature's God !

MORTO.

A mountain life possesses many charms ;
A city also hath some pleasant things
Which I remember ; therefore blame me not
If I prefer to live within its walls.
And thou, methinks, will find a new delight,
If in a city destiny should place
Thy life and purpose, passion and desire.
There things will greet thee, which will start
anew
Thy comprehending love ; for sights and sounds
Which live upon the trail of enterprise
Have there their centre. There, Perseverance
With blazing torch will lead the true heart on
To grand success, — to fortune, and to fame.
There, Art is fostered ; there, the talent blooms
That might have withered had it stood alone.
Nature may plant great talents in a man,
Which lacking proper culture may not grow,
But prove a burden which the passing time
Will carry to oblivion.
But if 'tis married to a rising soul,
One that would trample down the barricades
Which fronts the marcher on the way to Fame,
It is a jewel and worth possessing.

And in a city such a jewel grows
By sample, precept, and necessity ;
It gathers lustre from surrounding lights,
To give again a purer, brighter flame
For man's advantage and for man's delight.
Then what we own, or what we grow to love,
Stands first in estimation. Let us feel
That we respect the loves of other men,
Before we look for their's to 'bide with us.
Thy love, the mountain ; mine, a city-life.

GIORGIO.

It has of late crept into my desire,
That I might in a city love to dwell ;
There, at some manly labor occupied,
By means of which to live, I might obtain
Knowledge of Art, the city, and mankind.

MORTO.

Then let Verona have the preference ;
And come with me, the venture will be safe.

GIORGIO.

Thou hast subdued me, or rather conquered
The half-won battle inclination fought
Against the love I cherish for the hills.
Verona shall baptize me ! There I'll go,
And satisfy my longing appetite
To see the city, the *boasted* city !

MORTO.

'Tis well resolved ! And from this time forward
Thy noble disposition shall command
My service and my life. I do admire
A noble man ! And I confess to thee,
That I shall lose the weight of my despair
In thy great heart's confidence and power.
Thy inexperience of a city life,
To fully compass all thy purposes,
Will need my care, direction, and esteem :
Command me always.

GIORGIO.

I thank thee, brother !
I shall be proud if I can earn thy love.
An honest man, though he may toil in pain,
Hath God's protection ; kings can have no more.

ARETINO.

Honesty is well ; but a *brother's* love
Should stand the test of time and circumstance,
For *brothers* should be one in heart and deed.
Strike one, the other feels the blow as keen
As if 'twere dealt to him. What one enjoys
The other will be pleased with. Neither keeps
A watch upon the other, save to guard
Against the accidents and ills of life
His brother's form ; and each will with his life
Defend the other's honor. And *I* say,

*A brother will not keep his brother long
Beyond the palings of his confidence.*

MORTO.

Thy timely speech reminds me forcibly,
That I am but a stranger on the hills.
My name, position, fortune, and *my crime*,
Are all unknown to you. *I am a wretch!*
Draw near to me and hear my narrative.

I am of Feltri, and my proper name
Is Pietro Luzzo; but necessity,
Of which I will inform you in my tale,
Compels me to adopt a sobriquet
Whereby I may be known. Then let it be
Morto da Feltri,— so I would be called.

My parents were not blessed with affluence,
But strove against the march of poverty—
A constant fight, and bravely carried on.
They were both careful and affectionate.
My father, silvered by his weight of years,
Was eminently worthy of my love.
My mother— mother! Heaven bless her soul!
For there she went before I knew her love!
My sister, my senior by some two years,
Was fair to look on, with a goodly heart
And cheerful disposition. We were all,
My father, sister, and myself, that dwelt

Within the threshold of our humble home.
I, an artisan ; and the need was felt,
That I should labor with assiduous care,
That my poor father should not want for bread
In the winter of his life.

A cottage-home, one modest as our means,
In which we were industrious and esteemed.
We murmured not when Want entered our house,
As oft she did when Labor failed to guard.
We bore its presence with grim fortitude,
Well knowing that the time would come again
When Labor would relieve us of the pest.

But Fate had ordered that our pride should fall.
O spiteful Fate ! A cloud of horrors grew
Above our heads,
Which she could loose upon us at her will !
She lopped the lashings, and released the storm,
When we surrounded by the deepest gloom
Of desolating storm could nothing do
But bend our heads to our necessities.
A raging fever kept me on my bed
A nerveless man. The storm was fierce and dark ;
We could not ward it off nor shield ourselves.
Our little store, amassed by frugal thrift,
Soon went to furnish our necessities,
And left the future with a gloomy face.
Yet would my sister toil with zealous hope

To conquer Want, which on the threshold stood
Glaring upon us with its fangs exposed.

Each day's gray dawning brought us no relief,
But made the gloom more heavy, painful, dull,
Than did its predecessor ; and I sank
More helpless in the abyss of despair
With every visitation.

My sister, too, began to show the marks
Of that intense devotion to the task
She had imposed upon her gentleness —
The care of us, my father and myself.
At last her health gave way ; then all were gone,
And Death confronted us with ghastly glare.
I could not move, my sister daily sank,
My father with his years was powerless,
And all our stock consumed, — what could we do ?
We *could* not beg. O no, *we* could not beg !
What ! Charity ! that word now hugs my throat !

One day my sister from our cottage went,
Whither we knew not, neither did we know
For what her going. Being gone, what agony
The period of her absence ! Though not long,
Each moment multiplied its doubts and fears
Ten thousand times ; which, multiplied again,
Became a multitude of monster years,
To which an endless train of fears adhered.
A gloom impenetrable, dull, and cold,

Affrighted me, with no release or light
Apparent to my soul.

She came, and with her the young patrician,
The last inheritor of Monti's name,
The final prop of an illustrious house ;
He saw our need, and straightway gave relief,
Which he continued with a lavish care
Till Health resumed her throne within our
home.

I then to labor went with steady will
To earn the bread of life ; scorning the dole,
We in our sickness gratefully received.

My sister grew more lovely every day,
And the rich luster of her kindly soul
Made sunshine where she went.
And oft the young patrician to our cot
Was welcomed as our savior ; and he came
Not empty handed, but with such presents
As suited to my sister's mode of life ;
While I was not forgotten. One whole year
Unsullied happiness was in our house.

One night, since which the moon hath scarcely
done
Her nightly journey for the seventh time,
When from the shrine wherat I knelt in prayer,
I turned away to seek repose at home.

Near by the entrance a low whispering
Arrested my advance; so low, withal,
And yet so sweet and full of tenderness
'Twere wonder that I heard it,— nor had I,
But those familiar tones revealed the forms
The blanket of the night hid from my view.
My sister and young Monti did converse!
Her *voice* and *manner* told the *truth* to me!
His power was complete, and she, alas!
Received a further *promise* — given her
To quiet all her fears. What! our friend a thief!
The very beauty — grace of maidenhood,
Was stolen from her — stolen *by a friend!*
I held my passion by a giant will,
Determined that an honorable end
Should issue from the chaos.
At length they parted; and my sister went
Within our dwelling, where I followed her
With thoughts more gloomy than I care to own.

Next day, as was his wont, young Monti came.
I charged him with the crime, and did demand
An instant reparation or his life.
Derisive laughter answered my demand;
It woke a demon power in my blood,
Which adding fury to my well-trained limbs
Combined in madness; I closed upon him,
And in my fury dashed him to the earth.
It was an awful crash, and stove his brain!

He was a corpse, my sister little more.
I fled from Feltri, fled I knew not where ;
Devoid of purpose, and a wanderer,
With misery complaining at my heart,
And flying from the vengeance of the law ;—
I was accursed, and blood was on my soul !

GIORGIO.

Thy vengeance was secure !

MORTO.

Yet I repent
That I did kill him ; for by so killing,
I closed the gate forever to reform.
My father and my sister may be dead !
O, I have called down curses on myself,
For letting loose the torrent of my wrath ;
But if repentance will amend my heart,
And wipe the stain of blood from off my soul,
I will hereafter pray instead of curse.

GIORGIO.

Thy resolution is commendable.
I hope thy penitence may get thee peace.

MORTO.

Forever let the subject be at rest ;
The future must attest mine honesty.
Now, for Verona !

GIORGIO.

Aye, for Verona!

Come, Aretino, we go together!
From childhood we have never been apart,
We cannot now divide — we still are brothers!
And as we gamboled in our infant life,
And built our castles — though they were in air
They had the power of contributing
To our enjoyment. May not those we build
Be ours in common? Come, Aretino,
Let that old feeling never be destroyed!

ARETINO.

As I have been thy brother to this hour,
Let me continue — nay, improve in love,
That I may be a light for other men,
Who may in after years hear of our bond.

GIORGIO.

Truly, a brother!

ARETINO.

Trusting! defending!

GIORGIO.

Forever!

ARETINO.

Forever!

MORTO.

I'll join the bond !
And swear that we forever will be one !
Now, for Verona !

ALL.

Ho ! for Verona !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Public Square in Verona.*

Enter BARTOLO LORINI, and GIAN BELLINI.

BARTOLO.

WE must relinquish this laborious search ;
Though with it fades the hope that my lost son
May once again be held upon my heart
In filial endearment.

BELLINI.

Paulo was false.
Why not again mix in conspiracy,
And conjure up a tale to hide his sin ?

BARTOLO.

I see not where it could advantage him,
Knowing he must die : the law would not release
The felon from his doom. I must believe.

BELLINI.

Again relate the story. We may gain
Some landmark not extinct, which may lead
To the recovery of the lost one.

BARTOLO.

Some sixteen years ago, I did embark
With merchandise upon old Neptune's main,
And distant ports attracted my desire ;
They promised largely to increase my wealth,
Which then was princely — Venice had not one
Could boast a nobler name, a prouder place.
My palace, wife, and child, I did intrust
To my half-brother's care ; whom I esteemed
A man of proper love and honesty.
One stormy night, one dismal as the doom
Of Winter's fierce and foul extremity,
A messenger hailing from Verona
Knocked at the palace gate. The sound awoke
The drowsy sentinel, who hastened forth
To answer the alarm. He found a man,
With evidence of toil and sweaty speed,
Seeking an audience of my countess-wife.
He had despatches, said to be from me,
Entreating her to come without delay
To my assistance, care, and benefit.
Fearing some evil had o'er taken me,
And at the instance of my relative,
She turned her back to Venice for a time.
And ill-provided for the accidents
Which might assail her on the doubtful way,
She left the city on a gloomy day.
While on the hills, Treviso's rocky heights,
They were surrounded by a band of thieves, —

BELLINI.

Of which the rascal Paulo was the chief!

BARTOLO.

'Twas he that was to murder my poor boy.
My relative proposed it, paid the price,—

BELLINI.

And Paulo had it from the villain's hand !

BARTOLO.

I said they were surrounded by the band.
They were surprised, and while th' confusion
reigned

This Paulo stole the child and hurried off
Towards the mountain wilds, there to dispatch
Th' inhuman act and prevent discovery.
He did not slay the child ; he was afraid
That blood would stain his soul. He left it there.
A storm then raging on the rocky heights
Brought terror to his heart. He saw a fiend
Behind, before, by every stone, on every crag,
That yelled and howled and grinned and glared at
him,

And drove him to an ignominious flight.
Anon, his conscience crying to his soul,
Impelled him to return to save the child
From perishing. Alas ! he was too late,
The child was gone, it was not to be found.

Since then, a rumor telling how the boy
Was by a shepherd found, came to his ear ;
But what his name, or where he could be found
No tidings could be had. There ends the tale.

BELLINI.

Our search hath been with diligence —

BARTOLO.

I'm sure !

BELLINI.

And though Success hath not rewarded us,
She may not hold her favors far away.

BARTOLO.

I hope — and yet, at times, hope seems to fade !

BELLINI.

See yonder men ! those three that come this way !
Verona was not father to their blood,
They are too manly. Stand aside, and hear !

[*Bellini and Bartolo retire up the stage.*

Enter GIOROIO, ARETINO, and MORTO.

MORTO.

Did I not promise thee a grand surprise ?
And said I not the city would seduce —
Would make thee recreant to thy native hills ?

GIORGIO.

My native hills will always have my love !
Although some new profession I pursue,
My mother-nature will still cling to me,
And teach me love for eveththing I see.
To learn the arts of men, I entered here;
Not to forget the hills, my life, my love !

MORTO.

Well, here we are, strangers in the city !
In which to live, 'tis plain that we must toil,
Therefore choose, I pray thee, some profession
Congenial to thy heart. Maintain thyself !

GIORGIO.

So would I live ! Who would be a sluggard,
When Heaven in its goodness gave him strength
For life's achievement ? I am not the man !

MORTO.

Then boldly venture what thy wishes are.

GIORGIO.

Saw you, sirs, in the church of San Pietro,
Above the altar, that grand masterpiece —
Bellini's triumph ? what a noble thing !

MORTO.

Aye, who admires not Bellini's excellence ?

GIORGIO.

Admires ! O, reverence is due to greatness !
He is a master, sir, who can conceive
And guide his pencil to develop forms
So truly grand and lifelike ! Nay, to me,
They think and speak, and act accordingly !

MORTO.

Thou art much moved by this great master-work !

GIORGIO.

O, that's too poor a word ! and I marvel
If in our language could be found a word,
Or combination, that would well express
The admiration which my soul contains
For this Bellini. I could worship him !
I wonder as I gaze upon his work
If he is human, or a cloud-crowned god ;
For, surely, sir, no *man* could execute
A thing so grand. He surely is a god !
Could I command my hand to execute —
Vain fancy ! Yet may I not accomplish
By a persistence, by a steady will,
What I desire ? Surely, I may succeed !

MORTO.

'Tis much beyond our reach and present need
To covet such a power. Bethink thee,
Bellini hath his studio in Venice !

GIORGIO.

Some drudgery I'll do, to gain the means
To carry me, for my ambition hence
Is centered in Bellini's confidence.

MORTO.

Our fates are joined !

ARETINO.

Our love cannot divide !

GIORGIO.

Our friendship is forever !

ALL.

Forever !

GIORGIO.

And what profession does my brother choose ?

ARETINO.

Were I in service, in rich livery,
Moving within these courtly palaces,
I should be well content; yet quarrel not
With anything that fate may bring to me.

BELLINI and BARTOLO come forward.

BELLINI.

Good day, good people ! Whither are ye bound ?



GIORGIO.

In search of occupation, noble sir.

BELLINI.

Thou art a comely youth ; and I, forsooth,
Would now indorse thine honesty and thrift !

GIORGIO.

Doubtless I may have those fine qualities,
But may not boast of them, lest I be found
Not gold when tried. What would you, sir, of us ?

BELLINI.

Thy looks and carriage make me think thee fit
To enter my employment.

GIORGIO.

But, my friends ?

BARTOLO (to ARETINO).

This youth will find in my establishment
His wish complied with ; let him come to me.

BELLINI.

The rest in mine. Now, all being well engaged,
By your leave, we will proceed to Venice.

ARETINO (to BARTOLO).

How shall I know you, sir ? and what's your
place ?

•

BARTOLO.

Bartolo Lorini, a senator.

[*Aretino, Giorgio, and Morto, doff their caps and salute him respectfully.*

GIORGIO (*to Bellini*).

And yours?

BELLINI.

Gian Bellini.

GIORGIO.

Gian Bellini!

Am I not dreaming? Gian Bellini!

[*Picture—The Surprise of Giorgio.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—VENICE.

“ When morn awakes against the dark wet earth,
Back to the morn she laughs with dewy sides,
Up goes her voice of larks! With like effect,
Imagination opened on his life,
It lay all lovely in that rarer light.”

ALEXANDER SMITH.

ACT II.

SCENE.—VENICE.

SCENE I.—*Bellini's Studio.**Enter BELLINI, followed by BARTOLO.*

BARTOLO.

NAY, Bellini ! I protest thou art rude !
Because thou art thyself well versed in Art,
Art thou to sit in judgment over men ?
And will not stoop to what another loves ?
Will not concede another should be judge
Wherein what pleaseth him ?

BELLINI.

Good Bartolo !

It is not well to so exalt a man,
That his pride may become a stinking weed —
That he may get himself indifference —
That he may cease to exercise his care —
That he thereby his cunning hand neglect,
And lose his passion for the beautiful.

For when the Truth in her white mantle comes
Upon the ramparts of his fancied strength,
She'll show the timber rotten under him,
And pending ruin may affright his soul
Or drive it to despair.

'Tis ill-advised ; and in the sight of genius
Lacks honesty, to hold as excellence
The thing deformed.

BARTOLO.

Bellini is approved ;
He is intensely proud, because this youth
Is under him a pupil in the Arts.
And I believe the pupil is approved
By his great master ; and I also think
That I may trust the pupil with my love.
He loves Bellini, and Bellini loves —
How now, Bellini ! does that point touch you ?

BELLINI.

I cannot hide what is so plainly seen.
I will not seek to turn the flood aside
That wets my land. I will not cut a way.
To drown my neighbor while I save myself.
Giorgione hath a soul — a lofty one ! —
One that is foreign to a selfish thought !
His modest disposition, manly soul,
Besides the glory which he seeks to gain
In his profession, marks him for my love.

I would with confidence direct his course,—
Would give him counsel, that he may avoid
The rocks and shoals that circumvent the ship
Which his Art-love directs; — would start him fair,
That he may guard against the syren charms
Which everywhere abound, inviting him
To their false haven, to engulf his love.
Or, as the gardener — one who delights
In his profession, who for very love
Observes the season — knows the proper time
To thrust the seed into the warming soil,
Wherein it sucks as in a mother's womb
The nourishment of life — anon to come,
Tender and doubtful as a new-born babe,
A stem into the light of living day;
'Tis then his pride begins to show itself,—
He marks its tender youth, and from the chills
Of doubtful spring, of hurricane and storm,
He guards it carefully, — and as it grows,
If it should tend to evil or rebel,
Or go outside of grace, get slovenly,
Or sicken in the shade, burn in the sun,
Or get wet feet or cold, have fever chills,
Or wither in the leaf for want of rain,
Or mildew, parasite, or blight appear —
The thousand ills which aim at its young life
He manages with skill discernible,
Its follies chastened with a father's care.
And this is done, that when the flower blooms

It may be perfect and reward his care,
And so would I the seed of Art imbed
In this man's soul — would guard him from the
ills

Which wait to pounce upon him, to destroy
The fabric of his glory ere it blooms.

I'd watch it grow from tender infancy
To manly vigor ; I would see it bloom.

I'd see him mount to Fortune — hear the sound
Which Fame will send abroad ; for what he
gains

Detracts not from Bellini, but exalts.

BARTOLO.

Bellini being approved and at the head
Of living painters, would have Giorgio
Exceed himself ; and that without a fear
That his own sun will dim or disappear.
I know his excellence and honor it,
While I admire Giorgione's growing skill.
Have I not stood before Giorgione's work,
And seen the deep and tender sentiment
Living in beauty, harmony, and light,
Which like a dream would creep into my soul
And fill it with enchantment — when thy tongue
Would call me from the vision I enjoyed,
To hear thee rating him for some slight fault
Which I had overlooked ?

BELLINI.

I would the plant's indifference cut down;
I would not have it wither, blight, or starve,
But I would have it perfect in its parts —
Yea, very perfection when the bloom expands !

BARTOLO.

I thought Bellini's tongue at such a time
Forgot the gen'rous impulse of his soul,
And feared the tyrant would engender hate.

BELLINI.

I crave your pardon ! but you have to learn
That greatness is not made of careless stuff,
Nor yet the consequence of accident.
I know that men will often so pronounce —
Will charge it to that rascal Fortune's child, —
Some call him "*Lucky Chapman*," I believe !
We hear of him, and often see his pranks, —
How he will lodge beside a common man,
One who possesses not a grain of soul
For what is noble, excellent, or grand ;
Not that he loves him or expects to gain,
But that his frolickings may have a point,
An object for his mirth, mischief, or rage.
He takes another from the purse-proud race
And sets him at the bar an advocate,
Or on the bench, or in the pulpit raise,
Though he may not possess a pennyweight

Of common sense — that's one of his queer jokes.
Another from the anvil, or the wheel,
The loom, the chisel, plough, or threshing-floor,
To daub him o'er with favors or endow, —
But greatness is not a sojourner here,
Chance may be said to own the premises,
Or patronage, impertinence, or vanity.
But setting speculation on the shelf,
And coming to the real events of life,
We find that patience, pleading, constant care,
And never-failing love are needed here,
To fully enthrone and establish power, —
To make a man — a noble, godlike man! —
At least, that was my venture — my advance.
There was a student in my father's house,
Who said unto himself, "How great I am!"
And proudly would he look upon himself,
And prondly think that Fame held o'er his head
The laurel of the great and excellent —
That he was her especial favorite —
That he was surely worthy of the crown.
But when his master came to see the work,
The vision could not stay before his light;
A woful discord grew, things not akin
Bedimmed the picture, — it was incomplete.
Perfection was not there ; pride was rebuked.
He saw the truth, and forthwith made amends.
It was the just reproof which made him strong,
And led him on to win a name in Art.

And the genius of this same Giorgio,
If not perverted from its proper course,
Will gain a proud position for itself.
Then let me say, I would not have him praised,
Nor censured either, by a careless word,
A doubtful phrase, an empty compliment.
A man should know himself — then other men,
That charity may teach him to respect
And counsel freely. I would lead him on.

BARTOLO.

Perfection is not credited to man ;
Nor may he gain it, though he strive for aye,

BELLINI.

A trite observance ! But shall we delay
The effort to obtain it ? or dismiss
Our hope because it is so ? Never, sir !

BARTOLO.

Yet when we judge a work we look for that,
And if not there condemn it. What say you ?

BELLINI.

That is not fair. A thing that pleases you
Carries its value — is the very thing
That prompts enjoyment, tends to excellence,
Though it may be imperfect in its parts.

BARTOLO.

But Ignorance and Spleen will often criticize.

BELLINI.

Nay, not criticize: that means honesty.
Though they may stick their filth-encrusted
teeth
Into the sweet-ripe fruit, and make believe
The things are sour, rank, unpalatable stuff,
It does not follow that they are so foul
To finer palates. Do they not exalt
What is contemptible? what is most vile?
Give they not loud applause to villainy?
Garnish they not their statements, make them
look
So fair to common minds — to simple souls
That never tasted of the excellence
Beneath the skin — to minds incompetent
To tell what is offensive, what is foul,
What is exalted, what should be enjoyed, —
That they may wing the lie? It is a sin
To screen dishonesty or 'bide with it.
Is he your friend, who seeks by flattery
To gain upon your heart? and for the sake
Of not offending sensibility
Will violate the truth? And, by the way,
That shrinking, trembling sensibility
Is well incorporated with the stuff
Of which the men are made that follow Art!
But to continue, sir.
Is he your enemy that tells you to your face
Wherein your fault lies, that you may amend?

Is he your enemy that tells you to your face
Olympus never crowned you or endowed,
If merit does not stand beside your love?
Then let me say, sir, and observe the point,
That when we criticize our neighbor's work,
We should be courteous, kind, have charity,
If we would have our judgment unimpugned.

BARTOLO.

Were Giorgio mine own, mine only son,
I could not love him better than I do;
Nor would I more defend him or advise,
Nor less admire his gentleness of soul.

BELLINI.

His noble heart hath gained my confidence!
Think not that I am selfish of your praise,
Or envious of his worth, when I reprove:—
Bellini will not flatter or mislead.
A man may hear him criticize, and know
A friend is by him, one who loves the Arts.
But I have marked for a proud position
This excellent young man. Look in my face,
And see where Time hath left his signature.
My form is not as buoyant as of old,
Nor full of warm young blood, nor jubilant;
But with thin blood it tends towards the dust
From whence it came; and when it sleeps in
peace —

When these old bones are mouldering away —
 He who succeeds me should be well approved
 And own Bellini's influence led him on.—
 And I have chosen Giorgio as the man.

BARTOLO.

Thy choice is good: Venice will indorse it.
 But hath thy judgment so befriended thee,
 That Venice hath not hidden from thy sight
 The unity of those whom we saw pledge
 Eternal friendship? how they ratify?

BELLINI.

Verona's pledge is sacred to their hearts;
 No force can e'er divide it; no event
 Depress their confidence, or kill their love.
 See where they walk. I pray you, stand aside.

[Bellini and Bartolo retire up the stage.]

Enter GIORGIO, ARETINO, and MORTO.

GIORGIO.

Venice is passing rich — is beautiful!
 A queen! a very queen upon the main!
 And her law-loving subjects cheerfully
 Obey her mandates, bringing to her wharves
 The richest treasures of the Universe!

MORTO.

And first among her most devoted men,

I see Giorgione offer her his love.—
Aye, *all* to her!

ARETINO.

And nothing to his friends!

GIORGIO.

You both misjudge my heart and wrong yourselves,

By questioning my love, my friendship, or my faith.
My worthy brothers — most excellent men! —
And my esteemed good master Gian Bellini,
Not only claim but have the largest part
Of my soul's admiration and regard.

ARETINO.

I was in error, and ask forgiveness.

GIORGIO.

I am thy brother; I find no offense.

MORTO.

Verona's pledge shall be our Star of Hope.
Renew it here!

GIORGIO.

Let no fortune change it!
But let it be cemented, — stronger grow,
Until the heavens echo with the joy!
My life is in it!

[They join hands.

ARETINO.

And mine !

MORTO.

And Morto's !

And forever !

GIORGIO.

Where shall we get the value of the night ?

MORTO.

Thyself propose ; for where it pleases thee,
There we will follow.

GIORGIO.

Go we to the square
That's public by the pillar of St. Mark ?
There, we, observing each and every group
Of loungers, passengers, and public men
Gathered on the mart, may by their various
looks
See how fortune tries them. Or, shall we watch
The gay gondola from the gorgeous strand
Part Adriatic's flood ? and with a swan-like grace
Move silently and swiftly on its way,
With marvelous invertation pictured
On the transparent deep ? Or, shall we sit
Upon the famed Rialto's arching brow,
Enchanted by the melody that floats
Upon the evening air ?

MORTO.

Be thou the judge.

But, see ! our masters come !

GIORGIO.

Good even, sirs !

[*Bellini and Bartolo come forward; Giorgio, Aretino, and Morto salute.*

BARTOLO.

I hold a feast, in honor of my child,
Whose birthday comes in with the coming month ;
It will be in my palace, which, you know,
Is near the Senate House. Venice will send
The noblest of her youth to grace the scene.
'Twill honor me to have your company.

GIORGIO.

With many thanks and much respect, I, for myself,
Must ask excuse. I cannot fairly come
Among your noble guests. I am not graced ;
My birth, my culture, quality, are all too poor ;
They equal but my purse and homely garb.
I have not what's essential to be free.
'Twould be imprudent, perhaps impudent,
For me to venture, thus ill-conditioned,
Beyond the threshold of my humble worth.

BARTOLO.

I honor what is noble, what is true ;

The counterfeit despise.
Bellini has by his great excellence
Mounted the ladder of nobility —
I mean the true one — to the topmost round.
Genius, manliness, and honesty,
Are in Lorini's palace much esteemed.
They outrank all the titles worn by men,
Who live but to display them, — those I mean,
Who are not graced with virtue, common sense, —
Who block the wheels of progress, not advance.
The jewel is the thing that we esteem,
The casket that contains it keeps it safe,
But adds no special value.
A man may revel in a wondrous wealth,
May have more gold than ever Croesus had,
May let it patter in his path like rain —
A golden wonder, — if his heart was foul,
Gold would not help him to a common chair
Within Lorini's household. There, a man
Must have what's solid and acceptable —
Humanity to man and love to God —
If he would be known as Lorini's friend.

GIORGIO (*solo*).

Shall I go? It is a bold adventure!

(*To Bartolo.*)

I will accept — But stay, good sir, awhile,
My master will advise me if I go.

BELLINI.

'Twill be to thy advantage, to retain
This generous invitation. Diamonds
To show their beauty need some polishing ;
And men, like diamonds, will glitter more
When polished by a social intercourse
With those who seek to elevate mankind.
I shall be there. Till then, farewell.

GIORGIO.

Farewell.

[*Exit Bellini and Bartolo.*

(*Solo.*)

The die is cast, and I risk the winning.
The path is new to me, and I may fall.
I will adorn my person modestly,
And have a caution over every act,
That I may neither vex myself nor those
Who share my love. Friends ! we are out on
trial.

MORTO.

And much depends upon the enterprise !

GIORGIO.

Let every man look well unto himself ;
And let his actions properly agree
To such politeness as shall him insure
Honor and esteem. A man may enter,
Though his possessions be upon his back,

A multitude of nobles; if he has
Respect of carriage, honorable ends,
And that nobility, that true regard,
Which makes a god-like man. May we be found
Not wanting in the premises !

MORTO.

All's well —

GIOROIO.

That *ends well!* Be it in your care. Good
night.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The Same.**Enter GIORGIO and CORIELLI.*

GIORGIO.

A GREETING, fair lady! I must commend
Your beauty and your grace! Your living smile
And excellence of heart attract my praise.
That you may be most rich in happiness
Shall be my prayer! Pardon, I pray you,
If I am venturing beyond the gate
Of my domain, and trespassing on yours.

CORIELLI.

I thank you, sir, for complimenting me.
It is a woman's weakness, loving praise.
But I would ask, if 'tis in honesty
That you pray for my good. For, look you, sir,
The outside of a man is often fair
While Satan reigns within. Are you honest?

GIORGIO.

I know that I am honest; you shall judge.
Your noble father, the great Bellini,
Gave me admittance to his house and love.
He gives me counsel, and the path displays

To my ambition, that I may succeed
In what I undertake or what's before.
I owe him honor, duty, gratitude—
The service of my life would not discharge
My great indebtedness. I am his slave;
And yet my bondage I would not exchange
For mines of gold, parting his love besides.
You, like himself, add comfort to my life;
And as I owe to him I owe to you,
My service, faith — yea, everything in life,
And I will answer you respectfully.
I cannot hope that you will deign to look
On one so humble and so lowly born
As my poor self—on one whose purse is light,
Whose purse may ever be untenanted.
Yet I esteem you as above compare,
In all that makes a woman lovable,—
Modesty, intellect, and excellence,
With beauty, grace, and such rare qualities
As shall entitle you to much esteem.
I think you are an angel! Pardon me,
If I am trespassing !

CORIELLL

Now, that is flattery! rank flattery!
But then, it is your way, to raise a thing
Of human origin and substantial
To something dream-like, an airy nothing,
Coveting which ambition is unveiled.

GIORGIO.

Mine is success in all I undertake,
That I may justify my master's love ; .
But to obtain the least of your regards,
Exceeds by far the limits of my hope.

CORIELLI.

My father holds thee high in his esteem ;
And I in duty to my father's love
Must honor and esteem thee as my friend.

GIORGIO.

You, lady, are unused to toil — to such a state
As that from which I sprang. My origin
Can boast of nothing but obscurity.
My childhood was among the rocky wilds
Where I was born — a paradise to me,
For there the sun will shine to all my love ! —
My teacher — Nature, and her books my lore.
My wealth is on me, and I bend not low
Beneath its pressure ; neither may I hope
To gain beyond the wants of my poor life
A competence. While you have been supplied
From the full fountain of a father's love.
You have that skill in all that will refine
And raise your aspirations 'bove the dross
Of common understanding ; and you had
A multitude of friends about your heart
Exchanging love, besides a mother's care.

Your every want was cheerfully supplied
As soon as known, and every care was had
To shelter you from harm. If I could say
“I am your equal,” then I might be proud
To say, “I am your friend.” Not being so,
I am your humble servant, and I wait
At your command.

CORIELLI.

My father praises thee! and in his love
An evil thing will die! The soil is not
Congenial to indifference or deceit!
And what he loves, his daughter also keeps
In her remembrance as a jeweled heart.
Venice hath good and honest hearts, I trow,
But not a better one than Giorgio’s,
Nor one more worthy of my confidence;
Besides, he is my father’s chosen friend.

GIORGIO.

I pray you, lady, do not take a shape,
That my familiarity may grow
And blunt the sense of my indebtedness!
I owe your father and yourself respect;
I cannot venture further and be safe.
Yet your esteem I prize as I do life;
And it shall be a star to light my way
To win a name,—a name that will remain
When this poor flesh shall moulder in the grave.

But pardon me ! I am too bold with you.
I should be more respectful. By your leave,
I will retire.

[*Exit.*

CORIELLI (*solo*).

Why did he leave me so ?
Why linger I so fondly on his words ?
How very strange ! his words remain with me !
They seem to fill my soul with wonder and de-
light !
Esteem I him ? It must be my esteem !

Enter MORTO DA FELTRI.

MORTO.

Greeting, fair lady !

CORIELLI.

Welcome, good signor !
May I ask if you fare well in Venice ?

MORTO.

I shall be pleased to answer, and be frank.
For one in my position, I fare well ;
Had I a home where I might be at peace,
With friends around me, all would then be well ;
But I am houseless, friendless, as it were,
And lonely in the world.

CORIELLI (*soliloquizingly*).

And Giorgio ! may he not be so placed ?
Nor home ! nor friends ! nor companionship !
A man among the hosts of living men
Alone and circumscribed, is strange indeed !
What charm can wind about his solitude ?
What make life sweet, or e'en desirable ?
The world, as it is, must be a cheerless place
To one so single in his passing life.
His enterprises, dangers, and delays —
Aye, his very pleasures and his fears,
Are but the waves that roll and tumble him
Upon a troubled sea — the sea of life.
A man of no intent, content, or love —
A waif, a leaf, forgotten with the hour.

MORTO.

I am but poorly placed, not destitute.
I have a purpose — have a grand intent ;
And by my hope that I may wear the crown
Of proud success, I will not court despair.

CORIELLI.

But will thy purpose hold ? and undeterred
By frown or favor, march upon the way
Toward success ?

MORTO.

While I have life, it will !

CORIELLI.

What is it that you seek so earnestly?

MORTO.

Love.

CORIELLI.

Love! O that's a thing you should avoid!
'Tis profitless to him who lacks a home
To shelter it. I would advise you, sir!

MORTO.

'Tis Cupid's ordinance: the little scamp
Makes havoc with our sensibilities.
He turns the tide of fortune from our side,
Or brings it onward; and he promises
That great advantage shall accrue to us,
If we will follow wheresoe'er he leads.
By his exceeding cunning we are foiled,
Or grandly gain. He tantalizes us,
And plays the mischief with our confidence.
He fractures hearts — so careless of his shafts,
Nor thinks, nor cares what damage may ensue.
If, ere he shoots, he would consider well
The mark he aims at, he might then decide
Upon a *mating* shot, and couple them,
And call in Hymen with his bandages
To heal the stricken hearts. •
But, look you, how he often hits awry,
Wounding to the core a tender heart,

Which, pining for a mate, sinks in despair.
'Tis pity, then, and torture, not a gift.
The lady that enchants me does not know
The power which she wields.

CORIELLI.

Doth Venice hold the maiden of your choice?

MORTO.

Venetia's daughters are a queenly race,
And stately as their mother! But the maid
Whom I affect, stands foremost in the ranks,—
The sweetest heart in Venice!

CORIELLI.

Sweetest heart!

“The sweetest heart in Venice!” — that's to thee,
Being blinded to all others' qualities.
I may concede it; others may protest,
And question thy perception. Being in love,
Thy judgment stumbles to give her the palm.
But forward, sir, there's nothing gained by sloth,
But disappointment and its cloud of pains.
Do not rely on Chance — a deluder,
That draws you in her car to beggary,
And leaves your purpose rotten ere it blooms.
What you desire, I hope you may acquire,
In that you undertake it honestly.

MORTO.

I thank you, lady.

BELLINI (*without*).

Corielli! daughter!

CORIELLI.

I hear my father's voice. Excuse me, sir!

[*Exit.*

MORTO.

You are the sweet one that my heart adores!
Much I would give to win you to my love.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Chamber in Lorini's Palace.*

VOLANTHA and her maids.

VOLANTHA.

He that my father praises so exceedingly,
Hath suddenly grown popular, methinks.
A giant stride in Venice, Giorgione takes.
Old Rumor, too, seems to have been suborned,
To laud his progress in the ways of Art.
She speaks of him, as if he stood alone
In excellence — a miracle of thrift, —
As if Nobility and Grace had cast
This Giorgio in their mould. Well! well! to-
night,
To-night he will be here; then I may judge
If Rumor is reliable or no.

FIRST MAID.

Lady, what robe shall we prepare for you?

VOLANTHA.

The rich one, minx! that which my father sent,
The choicest fabric of the Orient,
The jeweled robe that hath no equal here

In princely Venice. I will wear the robe ;
For as the sun in brilliance far excels
The light of other orbs, I would to-night
Outshine the maids of Venice. For I hold,
That as Lorini ranks among the men
Whom Venice holds as noble, first in place,
His daughter so outranks the baser crew
Of her own sex. And *he* will come to-night —
Giorgione ! he whom I would fascinate !
A mountaineer ! a man from Nature's mould,
To wear so much of honor, and so soon !
Nay, hold ! or I my judgment may entrap
Before the evidence is fairly in,
And send blind Justice 'fore my prejudice.

SECOND MAID.

This wreath of flowers, with rich jewels mixed,
Will much addition give to your fair charms ;
Or this blush rose will show a modest grace
And rarer love ; — pray, which do you propose ?

VIOLENTA.

The wreath ! the wreath ! and let it blind the maid
Who dares to rival my supremacy !
I would that I was queen of womankind,
With power to command the eyes of men,
And centre admiration on myself !
To have this power over every one

Unquestionably safe, I would expend
My utmost energies — would barter all
My lesser comforts. It would fill my pride,
To see my rivals shrink away disgraced
And beaten in the contest. Men would come
To worship at my feet — would solicit,
And deem their labor light to win a smile.
The thing is worth contesting ; let it be to-night !

MAID.

I promise, you shall conquer in the strife.
Your rich and rare adornments will surpass —

VIOLENTA (*excitedly*).

My rivals' here in Venice ! My toilet !
Come, come to my toilet ! 'Tis near the time
Our guests assemble. Come ! to my toilet !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Ante-room in Lorini's Palace.*

BARTOLO, VIOLANTA, TITIAN, and others.

BARTOLO (*to USHER*).

WELL?

USHER.

The rich Count, Sebastian Zuccato!

Enter ZUCCATO.

BARTOLO.

Well, Zuccato?.

ZUCCATO.

Truly so, Senator.

I think I shall enjoy your splendid feast;
I came to do so, noble Senator.

USHER.

Gian Bellini! and his daughter!

Enter BELLINI and CORIELLI.

BARTOLO.

Master, my dearest, oldest, best of friends!
And you, dear lady, accept Lorini's welcome!

USHER.

Giorgio Barberelli, and his friends !

Enter GIORGIO, ARETINO, and MORTO.

VOLANTHA (*aside*).

Indeed ! Report hath barely told enough
 From off her ball of praise. I never saw
 A man so dignified ! so elegant !
 And see, with what an easy grace he moves !
 He would be peerless in a multitude
 Of proud Venetians ; and that's in his form
 Which cannot be forgotten when once seen.
 I marvel that a man so dignified
 Should be nor nobly born, nor rich, nor proud !
 He is attested : Rumor does not lie.

BARTOLO.

Welcome, sirs ! Lorini gives you welcome !
 The freedom of his house consider yours.

GIORGIO.

My heart must thank you, for my tongue would
 fail
 To give it full expression.

BARTOLO.

Never fear ;
 You are secure while in Lorini's house

Of his consideration and esteem ;
Your merit is sufficient for his love.

GIORGIO.

Merit is a thing which I may fairly doubt
As my belonging. It argues something
Entitling the owner to respect.

BARTOLO.

Thou art welcome here ! That should insure thee,
That I esteem thee as a chosen friend.

[*Presenting Violanta.*

This is my daughter Violanta,
My only daughter, and my only care.
My son was stolen from his mother's arms ;
I know not if he lives. This gentleman,
My child, is worthy of your confidence.
I pray you, entertain him.

VIOLENTA.

Signor Giorgione,
I shall esteem my labor well repaid
If I can please you.

GIORGIO.

I shall be grateful.
If I by words could show my gratitude,
I would give liberty to my poor tongue,
To rattle them around you till the air
Could hold no more of sound.

VIOLANTA.

Your modesty
Will not permit a merit in yourself;
Yet ere you gave your presence in our house,
Fame had announced you as a gentleman.

GIORGIO.

But I am poor! I own not even that
Which would protect me from the march of Want
A short month hence. My life is in my Art.

VIOLANTA.

Is genius ever poor?

GIORGIO.

As the time goes,
Genius often wanders after bread,
And supperless must often go to bed;
And yet, I think, 'tis rich — that is, in love.
In that domain there is a mansion fair,
One that is well adorned with such grand things
As itself loves — Excellence, Beauty, Strength.
It lives in splendor, — even like a prince
That elevates his subjects from the dust
By showing them the Great, the Wise, the Good.
It is Promethean in its benefits.
It has a wealth, not gold, but better things,
As ; — mind, imagination, beauty, power.
It has an avarice — a lofty one! —

That it may have its name upon the scroll
 Which Fame forever trumpets to the world.
Aye, that is my ambition.

ZUCCATO.

Ha! ha! ha!

You should be bound, for you are mad, methinks!
 What is your genius, if your meal-chest stands
 Chock-full of emptiness? 'Tis better far
 To have the comforts of a solid home,
 With substance tangible, and title sure
 For present purposes, than live upon
 The fickle hope of an enduring name.
 A painter! future glory! Ha! ha! ha!

(To VIOLENTA.)

Allow me, lady, to be your escort.
 Ha! ha! ha! A painter! Glory! Ha! ha!

[*Exit Zuccato laughing, leading Lady Violanta. The rest of the company following, except Giorgio and Corielli. Giorgio, as if deeply sensible of the taunt of Zuccato, and of his own position, meditates. Corielli approaches him.*

CORIELLI.

Dear Giorgio!

GIORGIO.

Ah, Corielli! sweet lady!

CORIELLI.

Heed not that man! his title sits not well

Upon his empty head. He puts to blush
The memory of great and noble men,
From whom he came a most conceited oaf.
His soul is not above the yellow dust
That glitters on his coat and weights his purse,—
Is as cognizant of the benefits,
Which man's invention, from the rumbling mass
Of thick-confused chaos, moulded into shape
By self-reliance, diligence, and love.
He lives to-day for what to-day provides ;
To-morrow is unknown, the next a blank.
There's nothing great or good in him to live
Beyond his day, in name, or place, or thing.
A butterfly ! ephemeron ! mist ! air !
Yea, very nothing constitutes his life !
So let him pass, a harmless, buzzing thing
That fills the number, but ne'er benefits
The enterprise and happiness of men.
Dear Giorgio, I hope that you to-night,
In this assemblage of Venetia's great,
May gather what will be to you anon
Of great advantage in your noble Art,
Besides the pleasure of the festival.

GIORGIO.

Thinking of me ! O wherefore think of me ?
I have no claim upon your sympathy,
Nor may I venture to a friendly thought
In your sweet soul ; — then wherefore think of me ?

CORIELLI.

You are the best and dearest of my friends !
I do esteem you as a gentleman —
Proud of your friendship — proud, if you will think
That I am worthy to advise with you,
And prouder still to have you call me "*friend!*"

GIORGIO.

You are my friend ! and I would have you more,
If I could place an equal in your love !
I may not hope — yet Hope would linger here,
And I would love you better than my life.
O if I had the wealth to share with you,
That I can fancy in ten thousand ships
Coming home to me, weighted to their waists
And plethoric with gems from far and wide !
O let my life be marked for Sorrow's cloud,
And be the curse of Cain upon my brow, —
Let every honest man abandon me —
Let thieves and vagabonds consider me
Below their calling, and let every door
Deny me passage — let kicks and buffets
Be plentifully mine where'er I come —
Let flying stones smite my defenseless head,
And drive me out to dwell in rocky wilds
A curse, a pestilence, — if I *presume*
To seek your friendship or receive your love,
Unless the value of my heart is fair
And well approved. Yea, thus Giorgione pleads, —

Let this curse stick and rust his life away,
 If he is profligate of your sweet heart !
 I have a name to win ; and as I march
 Along the doubtful way, be you my star,
 And I will march, endure, and bravely dare,
 Till I accomplish it, all for your love.

CORIELLI.

O speak again ! 'tis wonder new to me !
 Speak ! speak ! O speak ! that I may drink thy
 words
 As flowers drink the pearly breath of morn,
 Which rarefies their perfume, beauty, love,
 That amorous Zephyrs may upon their way
 Be freighted with their sweets.
 Let this enchantment never leave my soul !
 O speak again ! I long to hear thy voice !

GIORGIO.

This is my picture :— it may be a dream ;
 My soul delights to think it may be real !—
 I see you, *in the future*, all my own,
 And all my days are brightened by your smiles.
 The only angel that my soul can see,
 That seems to brighten, vivify, and cheer
 This life of mine — whose smile is joy to me —
 My master's daughter, pray you, pardon me !
 I am presuming and am trespassing
 Upon your goodness !

CORIELLI.

Speak, O speak again !

GIORGIO.

Come, lady ! the music is inviting
The graceful motion of your dainty feet.
O, honor me, dear lady, with your hand.
Why look so steadfastly into my face ?
What read you there ? Your bosom heaves and
falls,
As if some great commotion was within !
The music, too, which gladly fills the air,
Knocks at your ear for entrance to your soul,
But, lo ! the sense of harmony is gone ;
A sentinel more potent keeps the place.
O come, my sweet one ! Come, Corielli, come !

CORIELLI.

I am bewildered in this dream of joy !
I am so happy ! I am so happy !
The earth is beautiful, it smiles on me ;
The air embraces me and whispers joy ;
And I am in the mazes of Delight.

GIORGIO.

Tears ! my sweet one ! O drive them from your
cheeks !

CORIELLI.

Art thou Giorgio ? Then I am *not* dreaming !

GIORGIO.

I wait for you, my sweet one. Come, come, come.

*
CORIELLI.

I am not dreaming? I am *not* dreaming!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. — *The Assembly Hall in the Palace Lorini.*

Music. — GIORGIO and CORIELLI, VIOLANTA and ZUCCATO, BARTOLO LORINI, GIAN BELLINI, TITIAN, ARETINO, MORTO DA FELTRI, and a large company of ladies and gentlemen. Some are promenading, others are in groups conversing. GIORGIO is polite to CORIELLI, and he leads her to a seat, taking a place beside her. VIOLANTA leaves ZUCCATO and appears to be watching the movements of GIORGIO. MORTO, observing VIOLANTA's behavior, directs GIORGIO's attention towards her.

MORTO (*to GIORGIO*).

SEE yonder lady, the daughter of our host;
Give some care to her, and in courteous phrase
Admit her kindness. It will please her well,
And heighten our acceptance.

GIORGIO.

I thank thee.

(*To CORIELLI.*)

Excuse me, lady!

CORIELLI.

O but come again !

I shall not be contented if you stay.

[*Giorgio salutes Corielli, and then joins Violanta in the promenade. Morio approaches Corielli.*

MORTO (*to CORIELLI*).

Shall I escort you in the promenade ?

CORIELLI.

I shall be pleased to keep your company.

[*Morto and Corielli join the promenaders. Giorgio and Violanta come to the front.*

GIORGIO.

I am most grateful that you do approve.

My poor productions may stand some question
Before the people. Some will flatter me,
And laud my pictures as unparalleled ;
While others will protest our doom should be
A corner in Oblivion.

There may be in a thousand one who sees
The artist's aim — the merit in his work,
Who will be bold enough to publish it,
And fearlessly defend him to the last.

It is bald ignorance and tawdry pride
The artist mostly fears. He scorns outright,
Or pities that deformity which moves
To misshape and divert humanity
From God's intention — obedience and love.

While I bend lowly to my Maker's will,
I do not hesitate to climb the rounds
To honorable mention in my Art,
And time will best discover what I am.

VIOLANTA.

Time is a crucible, a purifier ;
If gold is in the mass which passes in
It will appear, nor less in value grow ;
The baser portion will be cast aside.
But you, in Venice, are accounted gold.
Venice announces that Bellini's name
Can have no better one to follow his
Than that you carry.

GIORGIO.

The great Bellini !
I fear I am unworthy of his love !
The great Bellini, as the noonday sun,
Gives out his brilliance ; in comparison,
I have but the glow-worm's uncertain light.
I pray that he may live so long and well,
So long and well, that men will lift their caps
As he moves on his way. And when no more
His grand old form is seen above the soil,
His name will be remembered in the list
Of those who graced the earth : — a monument
As lasting as the granite by the sea.

VIOLENTA.

Wherefore, I pray, are you so warm in praise
Of this Bellini?

GIORGIO.

Because I love him!
Yea, even as a god my heart adores
And turns to him! Deserve I censure? No!
The river of my soul's love flows to him.

VIOLENTA.

It seems to me, your heart 's so full of him,
There is no vacancy, no standing place
For other occupation. Love may knock
At your cold heart for entrance — may remain
Until his golden locks grow thin and gray —
May die in second childhood uninsured
That his loud summons had been heard within
That stony heart of yours.

GIORGIO.

Because a man *does* love his mother well,
Is he to hate his wife? His heart expands
To every fresh addition. There's no end
To his enjoyment if he truly loves.
Love is observing, and its influence
Encourages and helps the trusting heart
To persevere in that which will attain
Perfection to itself. I am not bound

By any person, principle, or thing,
To single my attachments or desires ;
But my profession teaches me to love
The things which God hath made ; for there I see
A grand example, and would follow it.
I love my master, for he is a man
Most eminent, godlike, and qualified.
He is deserving of my soul's regard.
He is endowed with every principle
That elevates a man and makes him fair.
My brothers, too, stand well within my love.
But I regard *another* more than all, —
I mean I love another, one so pure
That Heaven itself seems to light up her soul.

VIOLENTA (*aside*).

This man is truly noble, and in love !
I will observe him closely ; he may stand
Before my equals as a gentleman.
Had he a title, an olden name,
E'en though no ducat was within his purse —
Ah, no ! my pride ! my pride, how it would fall !

[Corielli breaks away from Morto, and comes to the front,
followed by him.

CORIELLI.

No more, I charge thee, let me hear thy voice
On such a theme. I am thy friend, no more.

MORTO.

Lady, I crave your pardon !

CORIELLI.

I give it,
For what has gone before ; but, henceforth,
Let silence guide thee — mental and vocal,
Unless I should deny thee to my friends.

MORTO.

Forgive me, lady ; and I, in all my ways,
Will not offend — will serve you with my life.

CORIELLI.

It will serve thee, to never hope again,
Unless denial should be sent to thee,
With scorn, contempt, and loathing, to dismiss
Thy presence, insolence, and' impudence.
I may accept thy friendship, not thy love.

[*Giorgio, observing Corielli's excitement, leaves Violanta abruptly and joins Corielli. This action wounds the pride of Violanta, and shows that Giorgio's preference is toward Corielli.*

GIORGIO (*to CORIELLI*).

Tired, my sweet one ?

CORIELLI.

Not when thou art here.

GIORGIO.

I wait to serve you, Sweet-heart.

CORIELLI.

Sit by me,
And tell again the story of thy life.
'Tis passing strange ! and I delight in it ;
And every repetition whets my love,
For I find something new in every line
That pleases me, I had not seen before.

[*Giorgio sits by Corielli, and appears to be telling some story. The company gather about him and appear to be interested. Violanta is excited and angry. Morto is depressed.*

VIOLANTA (*aside*).

I hate yon painter's daughter ! fiercely hate !
I would that I could crush her ; for she comes
Between myself and power. Would that she were
Deformed, repulsive, black as Ethiopie,
That every one would spurn her ! Ah, I see !
She loves yon Giorgio ! Well, well ! what then !
Let her love, *it will avail her nothing.*

MORTO (*thoughtfully, but heard by Violanta*).

I love her madly, yet I cannot hope
To gain upon her heart. Alas ! alas !

VIOLANTA.

Of whom spoke you ?

MORTO.

Of Bellini's daughter,
The fair Corielli !

VIOLENTA.

Would you possess her?

MORTO.

She hath refused to entertain my suit.

VIOLENTA.

If I could tell you how to win her heart,
Would you adventure for 't?

MORTO.

Sketch but the toil,
I will complete it. Never fear for me!

VIOLENTA.

Soon I will send for you, when I will make
The matter clear. But can I trust you, sir?

MORTO.

Prepare an oath: fear not that I will cringe.
Make it so binding, that the parting off
Will bar my soul from heaven, I will swear
And seal the bond with blood, if I may win.

VIOLENTA.

See that my summons when it comes to you
Have quickly your attention.

MORTO.

I will attend you.
[Exit Violanta and Morto.

GIORGIO (*rising from the seat and coming forward, as if at the end of his story.*)

Then we were safe.

CORIELLI.

Thank Heaven!

GIORGIO.

That we were safe?

CORIELLI.

Aye, but of thy foster-brother tells us!

GIORGIO.

O pardon me! I had forgotten him.
It is a fault and selfish, that I should
Myself, and of myself, maintain your ear,
When others are entitled to your care.

CORIELLI.

O tell the story as you told it once,
When evening softly crept upon the scene
The sun was leaving. You remember it?
You said, "Apollo, as he made the west,
Painted with gold and crimson, edged the clouds
With glowing lights." You must remember it!
It was when we sat on the balcony
One summer eve,—you now remember it?

BARTOLO.

Aye, tell the story, and our thanks will flow.

GIORGIO.

'Twas a cold winter night. The sky o'ercast
With dark and dismal gloom, and wind and rain.
The shrieks and howls which flew before the blast
Made space seem full of hell's inhabitants.

So fierce it was, the mountain seemed to quake
And shrink in terror; 'twas an awful night!
My father from the heights was hurrying
Towards the shelter of his cottage in dismay,
When suddenly he halted — an infant's wail
Came on the wild wind to a father's soul!
How strange that sound! and on the hills at
night!

Strange indeed! but being himself a father,
Having a tender heart — again the cry!
And this time most appealingly to him!
Perhaps it was his own, *his only child!*
Upon the thought, and guided by the sound,
He sought the cause with trembling: an infant
Exposed to the rude peltings of the storm,
Greeted his gaze. Quickly, yet tenderly,
He caught the babe, and, folding it with care
To his warm heart, he quickly reached his home.
Beneath the shelter of his manly care,
The foundling Aretino thus became
My brother and a man. When he was found

A clasp was on his arm ; no other mark
Whereby he might be known was ever found.

BARTOLO.

A clasp ? with motto ?

GIORGIO.

The same, exactly ;
A phœnix rising was the legend on't.

ARETINO.

See, here it is ! my only property.

BELLINI (*to BARTOLO*).

Here is a wonder, sir !

BARTOLO.

He is *my boy* !

ARETINO.

My father ?

BARTOLO.

Thy father !

ARETINO.

And worthy of my love !
[They embrace.

BARTOLO.

My hoy, my boy ! how I have looked for thee,

Year after year. I sought for thee, and feared
With that intense emotion of the heart
Which but a father feels so piercingly
When looking for his lost — *his only child*.
I hoped, and again, though disappointed oft,
That I should find thee — hold thee to my heart
Before Death silenced it. I am content:
The hope of years is gratified to-night!

ARETINO.

And I have longed to see my father's face,
That I might love him. I would fancy him
As one most noble, a great-hearted man.
I find him to be all that I could wish
Or fancy paint, — E'en like a goodly tree
Well barked about and healthy, sending forth
Its branches and its leaves to shelter those
Who swelter 'neath Oppression's burning sun,
Or suffer from the poignant tooth of Want:
A great-heart and a noble — honest man.

BARTOLO.

Omnipotence! I trusted not in vain!
My prayer has been heard; its answer, here!
Let me be always grateful for Thy love.

[Picture — *The Recovery*.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE.—VENICE.

“ When I am gone
The world will like a valuator sit
Upon my soul, and say ‘ I was a cloud
That caught its glory from a sunken sun,
And gradual burnt into its native gray.’ ”

ALEXANDER SMITH.

ACT III.

SCENE. — VENICE.



SCENE. I. — *A Chamber in Lorini's Palace.*

VOLANTHA and MORTO DA FELTRI.

VOLANTHA.

THY judgment must not sleep if thou would have
The blossom of thy hope well fertilized,
That fruit may come of it. Corielli is
The prize before thee, and thy *only* aim.
Let Caution be thy guide, and Shrewdness lead,
Thine enterprise will surely bring to thee
A tide of glory. Fear not failure, then;
But, mark me well, *there's danger in delay.*

MORTO.

I understand it — must advance my cause.
My love is glowing; it has grown so great
That every other enterprise must come
And bow to it. I am upon the sea,

The sea of Love, a cast-off mariner.
I battle with the billows, meet their rage,
And catch at straws in my despairing hope
To compass my desire. I seem to fail,
I seem to sink,— down, down to endless night!

VIOLENTA.

Thy passion would not let *another* have
What thine own heart affects?

MORTO.

No, on my life!

VIOLENTA.

What would thou undertake to win her love?

MORTO.

All that an honorable man might dare.
Publish the fame which young Leander won
For Hero's love, and I will sink his feat,
By my superior daring, to an act
Of small importance and accomplishment.
I will attempt to scale th' Olympian crown,
She on the summit, and the prize to me,
And dare the gods thereon to stay my course.
Old Sicily's Vesuvius shall not daunt
Nor terrify my soul, but I will mount
And face the wall of fire, and win or die.
The frowning Alps may rear their mighty heads
Capped in eternal snow, yet will I force

A passage to her side. No terror yet
Invented by the fiends shall make me quail,
Or blot my courage out. I will succeed
In every undertaking, if her love
Is my reward.

VOLANTHA.

But what of Giorgio? —
That self-conceited man, whom Venice hath
Beplastered with "*Giorgione?*" What of him?

MORTO.

Hold, I pray you! The earth holds not a man
More noble in his heart or generous,
No better friend, no brother more sincere,
No man deserving better of his kind.
He is "*Giorgione.*" "*Giorgione*" is my friend.
I love him, lady, and your speech offends!

VOLANTHA (*aside*).

"Tis well, I understand thee — how to move
To check thy king!

(*To Morto.*)

Thou overratest him, and much, methinks.
That which I have will modify thy praise.
If I unfold to thee a secret plot,
Wherein lies hid the vilest treachery,
Will thou be honest and expose the wrong,

E'en though thy friend should be the guilty
wretch —
A wolf wrapped in the fleece — a baptized knave ?

MORTO.

Show me his guilt, I will not hesitate
To show the monster in his ugliness
For human detestation.

VIOLANTA.

I'll trust thee.
Thus the story goes, — that Giorgio *loves*,
And that *Corielli entertains his love*.

MORTO.

Then I forever will compel my heart
To thrust out its desire. I love him so,
That all my life and having shall be his !

VIOLANTA.

He, like a date-stone, folds up to himself!
In order that he may advance himself,
He would destroy his friends — would barter all —
Would force the pride of manhood from his soul,
And see his honor dead : a villain, he !

MORTO.

Again, your speech offends ! I must not hear
My friend traduced !

VIOLENTA.

Thy judgment sits upon
A one-side evidence. What I advance
May alter its importance. Then hear to me :—
This Giorgio, by the right of friendship,
Held of my father and his new-found son,
Hath access to our palace at his will.
Emboldened by my brother's sudden rise,
And of his liberty, he manifests
A most obnoxious disposition here
To be *our* equal, and he presses *me*
To listen to *his love*. He praises me,
And vows that **I** alone live in his heart.
He, like a villain, covets what we have ;
And, like a thief, would have *me* steal away
With *him* from Venice. Marry, I protest,
I know him as a most accomplished knave !

MORTO.

Gods ! do I hear ? Can this man so deceive !
I'll seek him out ; I will expose the cheat ;
The counterfeiter shall no more impose
Upon my heart. I will not shelter fraud.

VIOLENTA.

A man of such exquisite villainy
Must be encountered on his chosen ground.
Thy rash intemperance would be no match
For his diplomacy. Use good silence,

Or put him on his guard, and so expose
Mine honor to his secret villainies.

MORTO.

What confidence have I in any man
If I am wrecked on Giorgio? none, none!

VIOLANTA.

Heed my counsel. Go to thy lodging, go;
Exhibit no concern in all thy ways,
Nor let him see thou art observing him,
But watch him — mark his every action well
And store it in thy judgment; it may come
A witness to establish what I say.
And when he comes again to press his suit,
I will advise thee of the time and place;
Upon that instant come, and come with *her*
Who should have knowledge of his villainy.
Creep into yonder chamber silently,
From thence observe this *seeming honest* man
Unfold himself. But, mark you, have a care
Upon your tongue, or all may come to grief.
This key will give you entrance. *Be you firm.*

MORTO.

As granite rocks resist old Ocean's march,
So will I stand.

VOLANTIA.

Corielli is for thee!

Now hie thee home. Stay, here is gold for thee!

[Offering a purse.

MORTO (*refusing it*).

I am not guilty of a single act
Since I have been called Morto, that I should
Blush when the name is sounded in mine ear,
Or hide my face behind a double veil.
But if I took your gold for doing right,
I should deserve the scorn of every man,
And conscience would upbraid me. No, lady,
I seek for *light*! Can Giorgio be so base!

[*Exit.*

VOLANTIA.

He is a fool that runs into a trap
And binds himself! No matter how I work,
I will accomplish what I have begun!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Street in Venice.*

Enter TITIAN, meeting ZUCCATO and others.

ZUCCATO.

WHAT news, Tiziano?

TITIAN.

The great Bellini—

ZUCCATO.

“*The great Bellini!*” the great fiddlestick!

TITIAN.

Is dying.

ZUCCATO.

Well, he's but a painter, sir!

TITIAN.

O shame upon thy disrespectful tongue!
The merit of ten thousand lives combined,
Were each one like thine own, would fail to meet
Bellini's value. Nay, his poorest part
Would far exceed the value of the mass.
Speak of him as he is — the brightest gem

That glitters in the Adriatic crown
Venetia wears. Bellini, sir, *is* great!

ZUCCATO.

Venice gives liberty to every man
To honor his opinion. This is mine:
He is a painter, and a painter hath
But little in the state. What loseth it
When this Bellini dies? *A painter, sir!*

TITIAN.

Enjoy thy "*liberty!*" It is a thing
Light as a feather in the moving air,
And of as little value to mankind,
When put to such irreverence as thine.
Bellini's loss will be severely felt—
Will cause a sorrow in the hearts of all
Who know his goodly, noble qualities.
We know, a man possessing such a mind
Comes not in every age. Fortune is not
Too lavish with her favors or her smiles.
All honor to Bellini's memory!
Giorgione's named as his successor here,
And fame reports him as the proper man
To fill the vacancy.

ZUCCATO.

Except myself
All speak him fair; while I, for oddity,
Give him his right position — *a painter!*

TITIAN.

You are an oddity !

ZUCCATO.

I am, indeed !

TITIAN.

*Indeed, you are a *very* oddity !*

Enter a MESSENGER.

What of Bellini, sir ?

MESSENGER.

I am express
Sent from his house to call the good Lorini.
Bellini soon will pass away from us !
We lose a master, sir, whose every act
Was done in kindness !

TITIAN.

I shall lose a friend ;
Venice a jewel ; Art a follower ; —
Mankind a brother with a manly heart.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A Room in Bellini's House.*

BELLINI *on a couch.* CORIELLI, GIORGIO, ARETINO, and others about him.

BELLINI.

My child, my only one, grieve not for me!
A creditor is standing at my side,
Demanding what is due. My life he claims,
And will have payment—will not compromise.
As in the course of nature all things die,
Why should I mourn to follow in the steps
Of my ancestors? Better men, I wot,
And more esteemed, with grander souls
Than mine was ever, have preceded me—
Have leaped into the darkness, sounded it,
And now repose from care, from toil, and pain.
Then think of me!—of me, though I depart;
But think that I am raised above the walks
Of dull mortality, unto an end
Wherein lies hid the secret of our God.
Be happy, O be happy! I am well!

CORIELLI.

Father!

GIORGIO.

My much loved master!

BELLINI.

Hear me out.

I have with pride the fond affection seen,
 Which lives within your hearts; it pleases me.

GIORGIO.

I love Corielli; for she is yourself
 In all that appertains to excellence.
 I love her—I adore her gentle soul,—
Remembering your kindness unto me.
 I love her, and I fervently believe
 That she inclines to me. I prize her love
 More than the treasures of a thousand worlds.
 The treasure of her heart is more to me
 Than my poor nature. My ambition's poor
 If her fair star is not before my soul.
 Her hand, at my request, she will retain
 Till I am worthy of it—till I can mate
 Her own sweet nature with a godlike love.
 And Heaven will approve me, and exalt.

BELLINI.

I am content to leave her in thy care.

Enter BARTOLO LORINI.

BARTOLO.

I am in sorrow, seeing thee, old friend,
 In this extreme of life.

BELLINI.

I am happy;
Yea, I am happy! Wherefore else, I pray?
Have I not loving hearts about my bed?
Have I more sins to carry to my grave
Than would outweigh my love?

BARTOLO.

I also ask,
Wherein Bellini was not truly great?
No choking weed could flourish in the soil
Of his kind nature; no temptation spoil.

BELLINI.

Old Time is numbering the falling sands
That yet belong to me; I must submit.
Well! 'Tis the end of an eventful life!

BARTOLO.

A life of honor!

GIORGIO.

Great in deeds of love!

BELLINI.

My night approaches; darkness grows apace.
The woodman Death hews at my tree of life;
The little strength that stays to anchor it,
He soon will cut apart; it then will fall—

Will be to other storms insensible,
And silence be with me for evermore.

BARTOLO.

Thyself, Bellini, art a proper man
To show the way to me that I must go.
A few more storms, and this old trunk will blast,
And fall beneath the shafts of hungry Death.
Would that we fell together on the field,
That thy most noble soul might convoy mine
To light beyond the tomb ! Bellini, wait !
O wait for me ! I shall not tarry long !

BELLINI.

O stay, Bartolo ! for thou art my friend ;
And I would have thee hearken to my will,
And answer its conditions to my love.
My little store I give unto my child
And her affianced husband Giorgio ;
My soul I give to God from whom it came.

GIORGIO.

If I betray your confidence in aught,
Let me be cursed forever before men,
And want that grace to save me from the foe
Of God and man !

BELLINI.

I know thy heart is well.

CORIELLI.

My father! O I cannot speak my love!

BELLINI.

My time approaches; send my confessor.
I bid you all farewell.

CORIELLI.

O my father!

GIORGIO.

Master, friend, and FATHER — all, farewell!

BELLINI.

Farewell, my children! Heaven bless you all!

[*Corielli and Giorgio kneel. Bellini blesses them, after which a priest approaches and administers the sacrament to Bellini.*

[*Picture—The Death of Bellini.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE. -- VENICE.

“A passion has grown up to be a king,
Ruling my being with as fierce a sway
As the mad sun the prostrate desert sands! ”

ALEXANDER SMITH.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—VENICE.



SCENE I.—*A Room in Bellini's House.*

GIORGIO and CORIELLI.

GIORGIO.

CORIELLI, my sweet one, prithee chide me not,
Nor doubt that I shall ever fail in love,
Or change to thee;
For while the lamp is burning in my soul
Its flame is much enhanced by thy sweet heart.
O doubt it not! for in that doubt there dwells
A crouching demon, who would fiercely bind
Your better nature, and destroy your peace.

CORIELLI.

I am happy, yea, happy in thy love!
The sun would shine—but to my soul no light;
The earth's great beauty would dissolve away;
My life, now sweet, would be a pilgrimage,
No hope presuming, no joy consuming,

With darkness in the windows of my soul ;
Great Heaven itself would quickly disappear ; —
If thou did not enliven all to me.
My earth and heaven, sun and moon, and life,
All centre in thyself, thy life, thy love !

GIORGIO.

Another moon will see our love complete,
When we together on life's great highway
Will march in harmony. And we will press
Into the service of our perfect love,
All that will most enhance our happiness.
Our home — *our home* shall be a paradise !
Our only care, how to increase our joy,
Which, being enlarged, shall yet enlarge again
With new addition and development.

CORIELLI.

We'll have no thought, but what is common stock ;
No new delight, but what we both enjoy ;
No cloudy passage, but we both may feel
The blow upon our hearts ; the sun will shine
To light us on to love ; and when we reach
The evening of our day, and pass away —

GIORGIO.

We'll love —

CORIELLI.

Forever !

GIORGIO.

O yes, forever !
But go, my sweet one, seek companionship
Among your studies ; for I must away
On business of importance.

CORIELLI.

Why leave me ?
Do you not love me ? Does my trifling heart
Deprive you of your pleasure or your peace ?
Is it too selfish, when it would retain
Its life beside it ? keep the summer here ?
I know that I am selfish in my love ;
But thou, my Giorgio, will forgive my sin,
And set it down to fondness, not to fraud.

GIORGIO.

My brother and his sister Violanta
Hold my fair promise to join them at this hour.
They are Lorini since Bartolo's death ;
And they are worthy of that good man's name !
Bellini dead, Bartolo was alone.
Alone ! Ah, bitter sundering of the bonds,
The links that made the chain of their old love,
Whose strength was tried, and always found se-
cure,
Substantial, firm, and clear.— The bolt of Death,
To feed the hungry grave, destroyed the house
Where sunlight warmly shone.— The mystic cord

That held Bellini and Bartolo's hearts,
Was rent apart when great Bellini died,
But was united when Bartolo went
To join his good old friend.
O great, and good, and noble men !
O they were chosen — stood among mankind
As beacon lights !
As diamonds set in the grosser clay
Themselves show brighter, so these men appeared
And shone above the masses that went by.
Let me endeavor to approach their light.

CORIELLI.

O tarry not to long. 'Tis lonely here
When you are absent, and I think
That pity would restore you to my side.
I pray you speed your business, and return !
But yet, O love, lose not a moment's joy
To give your presence to my girlish heart.
I am a miser, and you are my gold;
And if I venture, I want interest,
And some fair promise that it will return.

GIORGIO.

I here advance a portion of the price !

[Kisses her.]

The balance of the "twenty" I will pay
At my return, if that you should demand.
Love will reprove me if I tarry long —

Will lend me wings that I may fly to thee
And thy dear company. All's well, my sweet!

[*Exit.*

CORIELLI (*solo*):

One month! it seems an age to wait a month
For what I would have here. But then, old
Time

Will not release his prisoner to me,
However I appeal to his cold heart;
So I must wait, must wait impatiently
The tedious time.

Fashion, thou art a tyrant — wayward thing!
Why didst thou limit, why adjust the time
That we must mourn for those that sleep in death;
And, by appareling, observe a gloom
Not found beneath the sable covering?
Those whom we loved when living in the flesh,
Should not be cast off as some tattered coat
And be forgotten; but they should appear
In Memory's fair garden as the bloom
That's perfect and eternal!
What more of love, inward or out,
Could I display to my good father's love,
Than to fulfill the wishes of his life?
Then how sin I unto my father's love,
If I should wish this month good speed away?
This month that keeps me waiting for the joy —
The joyful time when I shall be the bride
Of him I love? I wish this month away!

Enter MORTO DA FELTRI.

MORTO.

Greeting, fair lady !

CORIELLI.

Welcome, good Signor !

MORTO.

May I presume to speak ?

CORIELLI.

Of what ?

MORTO.

Giorgio.

CORIELLI.

If thou would praise him, invent some new way ;
Lest being below the summit of his worth,
Thy praise would not exalt him to my soul, —
Would not observe that which in him is good
Beyond comparison with other men.

MORTO.

I cannot praise wherein I am deceived ;
Nor censure either, till I am convinced
That praise or censure is well merited.

CORIELLI.

That's in thy words I cannot comprehend ;

But, knowing well his merit, I must praise :
Indeed, I hold him as a perfect man !

MORTO.

I am not certain that I have the truth
In what I came to tell, being but informed
By those who vouch for it. May I speak freely ?

CORIELLI.

If aught wherein I am myself concerned
Burdens thy mind, keep it no longer there.
But, mark, if aught of him, save in his praise,
Is living in thy mind, let it remain,
For nothing that is ill will I receive
Of my dear Giorgio.

MORTO.

It is important that you understand
The story as I have it.

CORIELLI.

I listen.

MORTO.

You love Giorgione ?

CORIELLI.

I love Giorgione.

MORTO.

If I may venture to release the tale

Intrusted to my care and meant for you,
I'd say, the seed of love which you had sown
In Giorgio's soil was either choked with weeds
Or blasted at the core ; or that some bird —
A lady, if you please — had carried it away
And left her own, a vigorous thing to bloom.
Giorgione *loves*, but *not* Bellini's child !

CORIELLI.

Liar ! villain ! Darest utter such blasphemy ?
The open evidence of thy evil heart ?
The foul wish of the foulest villainy ?
Tremble, sir ! lest the earth beneath thy feet
Distend its monster jaws
To swallow thee and thy colossal lie !
Or, is't so monstrous, that its bigness is
Thine own security ? Begone, I say !
There's liar in thy face so plainly drawn
It sickens me to read it. Go ! go ! go !

MORTO.

Lady, hear me ! I should sincerely grieve,
If in the issue he should prove as base
As I report him. I have esteemed him,
And for his benefit I would have sold
This life of mine ;
I crushed all hope of love within my heart,
When it stood in the way
Of his advancement; and I questioned not

His honesty or love. And if I come
With speech unwelcome, it is not mine own.
If he is false, I will forthwith proclaim
Mankind villainous ; there shall not linger
A sympathy within me for my race.

CORIELLI.

The torch hath been applied, — the fuel burns, —
My blood is all on fire ! Some calamity
Floats like a cloud between the sun and me.
I want the matter fully understood,
And I want it not. I must not seek it ;
Yet not possessing evidence to clear,
Shall I not live in doubt ? — in constant fear,
That Truth will come in thunder tones to me,
To clear the atmosphere or blast my peace ?

MORTO.

I would most gladly disbelieve the tale,
But with report I could have evidence,
Had I required it.

CORIELLI.

Go on ! go on !

The torture of the rack would pain me less
Than thy raw sympathy ! The matter, sir,
Be it the direst ill, must be revealed !
If thou, for thine own ends, but torture me, —
O look to it ! thy villainy shall have
A most exquisite punishment. Go on !

MORTO.

'Tis Giorgio's wish, that you 'should think him fair
And even to your love. He fully knows
That you are waiting for the joyful day,
Whose evening shadows should find you his wife.
He is a foul deceiver! false as Hell!
His heart is black —

CORIELLI.

Fiend! thou liest! But, go on!

MORTO.

I say, his heart is black, and to the core
A mass of rottenness! He seeks elsewhere
Than in Bellini's house a lady's hand.
The Lady Violanta hath a title,
And in her right there stands a fair amount
Of *golden* expectation, which he seeks
To centre in himself by wedding her.
Now, this I heard, I say. I have the means,
And can discover of its truth to-day.

CORIELLI.

False! false! O no, Heaven hath made him well.
It is a trick of thine to try my love —
To test my faith in his nobility.
I will not doubt him, cannot doubt his love,
Nor entertain a fear of his just cause.

MORTO.

I told no more than what was told to me.

CORIELLI.

I will not give it credence, lest it grow,
And from the semblance get solidity.
Indeed, I know thy tale's impossible !
Not having for its base a single fact,
It cannot stand before the glowing light
Of Giorgio's sun, — of his grand honesty.

MORTO.

I have the power to develop it.

CORIELLI.

The means ! explain ! 'tis better to be sure !

MORTO.

The Lady Violanta will receive him ;
Will in her chamber hear her lover plead
Th' advantage of his cause within *this* hour.
Go with me to the place. We may command
Admittance by this key. Thus we may know
If I have been imposed upon or no.
May *he* be honest ! *I* a guilty wretch !

CORIELLI.

Shall I believe, even if evident ?
Or make my vision liar to my soul,

If I should see the thing I would not see?
Shall I seek farther? and by seeking find
More doubtful premises, till sober Truth
Will have no more delay in her just rights?
Lead on, I'll follow thee!

MORTO.

This way, lady!
I hope with you, this tale may prove untrue!

[*Exit.*

CORIELLI.

My buoyant hope and ghostly fear advance
To meet my trusting love, my dawning hate;
And my poor tongue will covet curses deep
To mingle with my prayers. O Fortune!
If thou hast sent thy poisoned shaft abroad
To strike some loving heart, let me be found
To be the only weeper. Keep despair
A stranger to my heart! O Giorgio!

[*Exit.*

IA

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in Lorini's Palace. A Corridor beyond the centre Door.*

Enter VIOLANTA.

VIOLANTA.

HAVE I, in admiration, lost my pride,
And covet only him — this Giorgio ?
Was it his genius, was it Gossip Fame,
Or was it my desire to conquer him
Whom Fame so lavishly enlarged upon,
That raised him from the rank of common men
To balance my position ? Or was it that
I deemed the conquest easy, that I find
I am defeated ? I will not remain
And see my rival triumph over me !
Let it be love, or hate, or wounded pride,
I will insert my sting into the hearts
Of all my enemies. Yea, they shall feel
That Violanta can strike deep and sure !
Their fell destruction must needs be a balm
To my most bitter hate. If I should sink
Into the abyss of my own design,
And Hell front my advance, I will not halt, —
We'll sink together to the dungeon gloom
Where Ruin will engulf us.

Enter GIORGIO.

VIOLANTA.

You are punctual, sir!

GIORGIO.

'Tis joy to execute your kind commands.

VIOLANTA.

How speeds the work, that is to be the gem
In our collection?

GIORGIO.

"Tis done, and is not;
It lacks that finishing — that master-touch,
Which I cannot supply.

VIOLANTA.

Why, that is strange!
'Tis done, and is not! Exound the riddle.

GIORGIO.

'Tis done, as well as I can execute;
As far as I can make it, 'tis complete.
It pleases me, and does not; and I doubt
If I could better it. It is not done —
That is, not yet complete as I desire;
'Tis but a semblance — color, canvas, paint.
It plainly shows how poor we are to make,

Or even imitate the perfect work
Of grand old Nature. There, I am at fault;
Being but a man, I lack the gifted skill,
To finish up my work successfully.

[*Morto and Corielli enter the corridor cautiously. They secrete themselves, and watch the movements of Giorgio and Violanta.*

VIOLENTA.

Tell me, I pray you, how you set the piece,
And I will thank you. 'Tis a favorite,
A subject that I love; and when you tell
The story in your way, 'tis doubly dear.
I would you tell it, — nay, I beg of you!

[*Giorgio describes the composition of a picture. Corielli and Morto are much agitated by the action before them.*

GIORGIO.

Suppose the lady was yourself, and, here,
The lover pleads upon his bended knee,
While every line and feature's publishing
The depth of his devotion and his hope.
His very life depends upon the words
About to issue from the lady's lips.
And you may know her answer by her eyes,
Which show their wealth of love. The vermeil
blush
Upon the lovely cheek establishes
The old, old story. It was told to me,

By one whose locks were silvered by his years,
The hero of the tale. His purse was light ;
No title, land, or friend held him in place ;
No rich connections bolstered up his hopes.
Yet he was grand in manhood, rich in love,
And all bound to the lady of his choice.
She was accomplished, lovely, sweet, and fair.
And rich she was ; — the daughter of a Count
And heiress to the wide domains about
The castle of her fathers. Aye rich, rich, —
But she was richer in herself than all.
She was the jewel ; all that was about
Grew lustreless beside her, and abased.
The rich materials on her outward form,
The jewels, ornaments, and golden sheen,
Were less in light than Nature's lavishments,
Seen through the windows of her gentle soul.
The casket and the gem, the form and soul,
Were incomparable, unless we look
To Heaven for the test. To end the tale,
I'd say, the lady died ; the lover lives,
Though years have bent him, and his locks are
gray.
How like you my description ? my design ?

VOLANTIA.

I'll pay thee for thy story — *with a kiss !*

[Kisses him.]

CORIELLI (*aside*).

O perjured wretch ! dissembler ! fiend !
O misery ! misery ! misery !

[*Exit.*

MORTO (*aside*).

Is he the man I loved ? He, the shepherd ?
No, he is a villain ! bold impostor !
One covering the wolf with fleecy wool.
He must be punished for his double sin,
The sin to friendship and the sin to love !

[*Exit.*

GIORGIO.

The picture soon shall be set in its place,
You then will see my faulty management.
And pray you, criticize it right severe,
That I may know what marks emblemish me,
And I may mend when I proceed again.
Your servant, lady ! I will take my leave !

[*Exit.*

VOLANTHA rings the bell.

Enter SERVANT.

VOLANTHA.

Go tell my brother I would speak with him.

[*Exit Servant*

Enter ARETINO.

VOLANTHA.

Brother, are you the friend of Giorgio ?

ARETINO.

I am his *brother*, that is more than *friend* !
'Twas kindness, friendship, old-time confidence,
That made me *his*, 'twas Nature made me *yours*.
His manly form, his honor, dignity,
Besides his gentle nature, perfect love,
Ennoble him ;
And every one concedes him to be great.
The name that we acknowledge, wealth we own,
Came not by any special excellence
Which we possessed,
And they may perish with us and the hour ;
But *his* in coming ages will not die.
And I rejoice, that I can say to you,
I am his brother.

VIOLENTA.

Then you would save him ?
Would guard him from the villainy that stalks
About his passing ?

ARETINO.

Truly, with my life !

VIOLENTA.

List, then, to me ! and give him counsel now,
Ere he shall fall into the pit prepared,
And be the victim of conspiracy
Most foul and desperate.

ARETINO.

I cannot see

How any man can harbor e'en a thought
Of ill against him!

VIOLENTA.

Loves he Corielli?

ARETINO.

She is the very sunshine of his life!

VIOLENTA.

Then is the plot constructed doubly foul;
For, as I hear, he loves Da Feltri too
E'en better than a friend.

ARETINO.

Your words are strange!
I cannot solve the riddle you propose!

VIOLENTA.

Learn this of me, and have thy friend to know
The foul conspiracy that's hatching out.
Morto da Feltri led Corielli forth
To listen to his keen duplicity,
And in a moment of forgetfulness
She rendered her consent to his designs
To unthrone Giorgio;
And if she ever loved this Giorgio,
'Tis now turned into hate. She would be free,—
She racks her brain to furnish arguments,

To satisfy her conscience and the world,
That Giorgio is inconstant to his trust,
And not her equal:— 'tis a knavish plot!
Go quickly to him, let him know the worst;
But bid him quench the fever of his rage
Till judgment comes, that he may safely move
To the true issue of this foul business.
Have him observe them; but let Caution guide,
Lest Indiscretion advertise his watch
And they offset it. Do thou him advise,
For thy cool judgment will be needed here.

ARETINO.

'Tis villainy so great, I cannot find
The limits of its largeness, nor the word
That will express its vileness! Is it so?

VOLANTHA.

How profit I to misinform thee?

ARETINO.

True!

VOLANTHA.

I might have told the story to himself,
Which I have told to thee; but that I knew
Thou, being his friend, would better lead
him on
To safely stem the torrent of his woe.

ARETINO.

I am amazed!

VIOLENTA (*aside*).

Thus far my work goes well.

(*To ARETINO.*)

See to it! see to it! Good Aretino!

[*Exit.*

ARETINO.

The serpent warmed, its savior would destroy!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*A Street in Venice.**Enter GIORGIO.*

GIORGIO.

My humor serves me pleasantly to-night,
And sweet anticipation smiling seems
To welcome me to love. And Venice, too,
With her assemblage of delightful things,
Waits but my summons to advance her share
Of what is needed to complete my joy.
And I adore thee, Venice! beautiful!
For in thy garden my Corielli grew,
And blooms the fairest, freshest, sweetest flower
Thy borders ever knew. I love thee well,
Dear Venice! but, Corielli I adore!

Enter ARETINO.

ARETINO.

I was in search of thee.

GIORGIO.

Then here well met!
And I am glad thou cam'st at such a time,
For I am merry and content and free.

I have been thinking of the time to come,—
O such delightful days and balmy nights !
The sunrise of our love — the mid-day glow —
The evening twilight sinking into night, —
Yet every change was heralded with joy ;
For Love was there disposing happiness,
And all things did contribute to our peace.
'Twas paradise, indeed, within itself,
That Age had crept upon me unobserved,
And taken from my head his yearly due,
And I was *old* in years but *young* in love.
Why, thou art gloomy ! What is the matter ?
I see no cause for melancholy here !

ARETINO.

Thou art dreaming ! — It may be well to dream ;
For dreams, though empty of reality,
Oft balm the heart ; and this uncertainty —
This phantom of thy brain may prove to be
An empty dream — a vision in the air.

GIORGIO.

Not *real* ! not *sure* ! I pray thee, understand !
The smallest portion of Corielli's love
By far transcends the picture I have drawn
As Nature's work the artifice of man !

ARETINO.

Corielli is a woman ! and as such

Is tainted with the sin of mother Eve.
She is, like Eve, as ready to conform
The easy conquest of a serpent tongue.
Corielli is a woman, I repeat!
Then, as a woman trust her, *but no more.*

GIORGIO.

What art thou driving at?

ARETINO.

If it must be,
That thy affection will not turn away,
Set not thy heart so strongly to her side,
That disappointment, meeting thy advance,
May not destroy thy reason and content.

GIORGIO.

My heart and life are hers!

ARETINO.

I pity thee!

GIORGIO.

And wherefore “*pity*” me?

ARETINO.

O art thou *sure*
Corielli can be trusted? Is she not fickle?
Doubtful? wayward? Is she not changeable?

Would she not sip on this sweet flower's lip,
Then taste another, and another one
Not half so sweet as this? *O art thou sure?*

GIORGIO.

As much doubt have I of Corielli's love,
As I have of mine own. And I may add,
That I am sure Corielli's heart is true,
As that I know the sun will shine again
To-morrow noon.

ARETINO.

Nay, then, there is doubt! for to-morrow's sun
May not come through the leaden atmosphere;
The clouds that navigate the upper air,
May interpose their might to his advance
And hide his face from us.

GIORGIO.

Her soul I know so well, I cannot doubt!

ARETINO.

Well?

GIORGIO.

Well! why, 'tis well!

ARETINO.

And Morto?

GIORGIO.

Morto!

ARETINO.

Regard'st thou him? And well?

GIORGINO.

He is my friend!
But what's the drift of thy disjointed words?

ARETINO.

This have I heard, that Morto plays thee false.

GIORGIO.

Nay, thou art jesting at thy friend's expense!

ARETINO.

Time will tell what stuff we men are made of;
And women will be judged.

GIORGIO.

What is thy meaning?

ARETINO.

That thou art shamefully imposed upon.
Nor Morto, nor Corielli, stand to thee
Reflected in their light. They are not worth
More than should be the foulest thing alive;—
They are not fit to live in thy great heart.
Therefore to them exhibit thy contempt;
Expel them from the palace of thy love.

GIORGIO.

O monster lie ! O monster, monster lie !
 O thou art damned for that detested thought !
 It does unmask thy soul — thy selfish soul ;
 It shows a mass of villainy and sin
 Reeking like hell's vile composite.
 If thou stood multiplied ten thousand times,
 I'd cram thy foul words into every throat
 And choke it with them. O monster lie !

[He seizes Aretino.

ARETINO.

Nay, prithee, brother ! conquer thy passion !
 Anger but mars the very best of men ;
 The majesty of Jove it most impairs.
 How may I profit ? how gain advantage,
 By seeking what is not to shake thy faith
 In those thou lovest ?

GIORGIO.

If I should doubt her,
 Mine own existence would take wing away ;
 The purity of angels would descend
 To foul corruption and disgusting sin,
 And Nature stoop to stinking harlotry.
 I must not credit thee, nor doubt her love.
 O go from me and never more return !
 As Aretino past, I love thee dearly ;
 As Aretino hence — *we are strangers, sir.*

ARETINO.

Hear out the story; and remember this,
 The matter is not mine — I gather it
 From those who can establish it to thee.
 Though not for me, yet will I stand the test
 Of what may follow. Shall I speak freely?

GIORGIO.

Thy sin is monstrous, and it cannot grow!

ARETINO.

Heed my counsel, and as it may fall out,
 Act clearly, wisely, — as becomes a man.
 Morto has by some exceeding guile,
 Or seeming friendship, won Corielli's ear,
 And slowly led her to believe thee false.
 Thus far successful; next, he looked for more,
 And by some well-considered flattery
 He gained her confidence. And, now, for profit,
 He does conspire with her to find some way
 To silence thy complaints — thy interest
 In her and her estate.

GIORGIO.

I never doubted her;
 Why need I now hang on the skirt of Doubt,
 When I can fly to her? can tell her all?
 Corielli! No, I cannot think that she
 Is capable of fraud. — It cannot be!

[*Going*

ARETINO.

Nay, hold thy speed ! If thou would learn the truth,
Restrain thy passion ; thy intemperance
Will not consider what will profit thee.
Watch, but not watching seem lest they surmise
The drift of thy observance and escape.

GIORGIO.

Why these are tears that course adown my cheeks !
Away ! you counsel ill. What ! again ? yes !
Away ! away ! Corielli is not false !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A Room in Bellini's House.**Enter CORIELLI.*

CORIELLI.

AM I deformed? or less than what I was,
That I am set aside? that I must lose
The very thing I value — Giorgio's love?
I am deformed; for this destroying flame
Which licks and laps the substance of my heart
Cannot be quenched! its fury is intense!
My whirling brain cannot control itself,
Nor shape a course to meet its present need;
A multitude of plans war with themselves,
And I am helpless while the contest moves.
O wretched me! O cruel, cruel fate!

Enter GIORGIO.

GIORGIO.

Corielli! my sweet one! I come to thee!
What! in tears?

CORIELLI.

Be still, my heart!
[Endeavoring to control her emotion.
'Tis nothing!

GIORGIO.

But this is strange ! my sweet, thy cheeks are pale !

CORIELLI.

I am nor ill, nor well ; and yet I—O !

[*Bursting into tears.*

GIORGIO.

Nor ill ? nor well ? It is a riddle then,
This present grief. My sweet, prithee, explain !

CORIELLI.

No ! I am desperate ! I cannot tell !

[*Giorgio approaching her.*

Nay, nay, touch me not ! I am desperate !

[*Runs off the stage.*

GIORGIO.

[*Endeavoring to calm the emotion of his heart, and looking after her.*

This bad beginning like I not at all !
It bodes calamity, misery, and death
To all my hopes ; it elevates my fear ;
It rises like a ghost to fright my soul
And blast my life. Corielli ! Corielli !
Am I thy judge ? O let me hesitate !
Am I or Heaven to decide thy doom ?
If I, then let the facts appear unveiled,
Lest I, pronouncing judgment, injure thee
And murder mine own peace. Let me hesitate. —

Let me, at least, provide myself with peace,
 With justice, mercy, love — those attributes
 Which should adorn a judge — enjewel him
 As stars enjewel the heavens in the night.
 Let me accept what reason may receive,
 And look for better days. I must not think
 That I am in the twisted web of Fate
 Surrounded by black Doubt ; or woven in
 With gloom before and sunshine far behind.

Enter ARETINO and MORTO.

GIORGIO (*assuming a cheerful mood*).

Welcome, Morto ! thy hand — and thine, brother !
 Goes all things well with you ?

ARETINO.

Truly, with me !

There is not anything that I could have,
 Wherein to have I could be better pleased.
 I *may* have fears ; but, then, I *hope* all's well !

GIORGIO (*to MORTO*).

Thy hand hath not the grip it had of late,—
 It trembles, Morto ! Why look'st thou yonder ?
 Art thou dumb ? dumb ? or wouldst thou be alone ?
 Wouldst have our oldtime friendship put away
 As some old garment, battered, faded, torn ?
 If thou art Morto, the Morto that I know,
 Thou art my friend — *my brother* ; — am I right ?

MORTO.

You have my thanks.

GIORGIO.

And what are they, Morto,
Compared to love? a brotherhood of hearts?
I am not qualified to understand
What service I have done to win thy thanks,
Or thou to render them.

MORTO.

Yet I thank you.

GIORGIO.

What mystery is here?

ARETINO.

Unfold thyself!

MORTO.

I thank you for the *past*; what is to *come*,
Let it come; it will expose our failings.

GIORGIO.

Thy words like ice-drops mingle in my blood!
We know not what events will hence transpire;
The *Present* is our purpose. Make the best
Of what we have, and who will censure us?

ARETINO.

What is to come, let it come ; if good — well ;
 If otherwise, why need we fret or growl ?
*For present and to come our bond holds good
 In all extremes.*

GIORGIO.

Forever !

ARETINO.

Aye, forever !

[A pause.]

GIORGIO.

Why art thou silent, Morto da Feltri ?
 Why turn so coldly from me when I speak
 Of our old love ? I pause — for your answer.

MORTO.

I am not in the mood to answer now ;
 Some other time I will, and *forcibly*.

[Exit.]

ARETINO

Is that like a brother ?

GIORGIO.

My fears take root !
 Grief's clammy fingers coil about my heart,
 And hug my throat. A many-headed beast
 Assails my life, it tortures and destroys.

Like sinewed Laocoön and his sons of old
Contending with the slimy, crawling thing
Which surely wound about them, I appear
And strive for liberty. But my fond hope,
That I may conquer and emerge aright,
Is fading from my soul,—a passing dream.
The whirling waters hem me round about;
The centre will devour, and I must sink
Forever from the light of living day.
O me! O me! let this cloud pass away!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—BELLINI'S Studio. *A Recess on one side of the Stage; on the other an Open Window, through which Venice can be seen. Moonlight.*

MORTO and CORIELLI are discovered. GIORGIO and ARETINO in the recess watching them.

CORIELLI.

O MISERY! misery! misery!
What have I done that I detest myself?
That I am set aside? I'll tear my love
Up by the very roots, though it should snap
My thread of life and canker o'er my soul!
My blood is boiling in my swollen veins;
My poor heart yearns and beats for liberty;
My maddened brain would hurl defiance forth,
And conquer or destroy. A demon stands—
His claw-like finger pointing to a grave
Where Silence is; and I perceive Despair
Plotting with ghastly Murder and Revenge.
O let me but complete mine enterprise,
Ere madness sinks me in the deep abyss
Of self-forgetfulness! O let me end
My woes and life together!

MORTO.

Quit Venice,
Forever quit the scene of misery,
And seek forgetfulness beyond the sea.
Some new endearment will bring comfort home,
A balm to your distemper's deep distress.

CORIELLI.

Forget! I never can forget my pain!
I would forget myself and all the world
When my revenge is done. O let me strike—
Strike terror to the heart of her who stole
The life of my delight! my soul's best love!

MORTO.

Long have I loved you, long and truly loved,
And likewise loved my friend. I gave him all
That was in my possession — e'en yourself.
I said that he was noble, was a better man
Than I could be, or ever hope to be;
Your gentle soul would be a better mate
To his than mine. Compared to him, I was
A mole-hill to a mountain; and our worth
Alike stood far apart.
His genial disposition, as I thought,
To my cold qualities stood as remote
As Arctic's icy regions from the South,
Where constant summer reigns.
Time hath developed his sharp avarice,

Hath shown his heart to be a mass of sin,
 Where manhood should have been. Think of it,—
 If you remain in Venice when he marries her—
 The Lady Violanta — you will become
 The centre for the foulest thing of all—
 The gossip's slander. She will point at you,
 Will call you “cast-off!” and such other names
 As that detested crone finds in the sink —
 That filthy, foul, and rotten heart of hers.
 You must leave Venice! —leave it forever!

CORIELLI.

Venice! aye, leave Venice, and forever!
 Leave Venice! — and to-night! — and forever!
 I care not whither, if I from Venice
 And my accursed lot am led away.

[*Morto leads off Corielli.*

GIORGIO and ARETINO come forward.

GIORGIO.

My work is done! — done! Nothing now remains!
 Here ends my toil, ambition, *all* my hopes!

[*Overcome by his emotion he sinks on his knees.*

ARETINO.

Courage, my brother! Be a man again!

GIORGIO (*rising*).

I am a man! these tears proclaim the fact.

I must give up to grief, tears must ensue,
 And sobs choke utterance. Corielli gone,—
 What am I when alone? A lone, lone man!

ARETINO.

My heart is bleeding, tears are in mine eyes.
 Loud curses on the villain whom you saved!
 'Twere better he had perished on the hills,
 Than set his poisoned teeth into your life!

GIORGIO.

Darkness is before me! nothing but the Past
 Presents itself to my fond imagery.
 My brain's invention cannot now proceed,
 The gloom's impenetrable, — *my race is done!*
 Back to the hills! the hills! I will — to-night!

ARETINO.

To-night? So soon?

GIORGIO.

To-night! why not to-night,
 When here is desolation in my soul?
 I have decided, and will go to-night!

ARETINO.

I am thy brother now, as in the past;
 My bond shall have observance to the last.
 I will not leave thee till this cloud is past,

Save to provide for safety on our way
Toward the hills.

GIORGIO.

I will remember thee.
A brother, true of heart, cannot be found
At every crossing. Good Aretino,
Let me acknowledge and commend thy love.

[*They join hands, and after the grip Aretino goes off. Giorgio, absorbed in meditation, approaches the window and looks out on Venice. The moon shining upon his face reveals the depth of his emotion. (This scene should form a picture.)*

GIORGIO (*to VENICE*).

Venice! Venice! my soul wells out to thee!
Thou sitt'st upon the bosom of the deep
A stately thing,—a queen, a very queen!
Thy prowls the billows part on every sea,
To spread thy treasure, and to gather home
The growth of every clime;
For Commerce here delights to keep her stores.
Art loves thee, too; and keeps some state within,
Where she can with her lovers live at peace.
Thou art before my soul imbathed in love;
So soft, indeed, and so like to repose,
That I might safely question of thyself
If in thy keeping could be found a heart
Inborn to grief. The pale moon looks at thee—
Looks on thy palaces and lofty domes,
Which seem in silvered majesty to rise

To something more sublime and excellent
Than that which keeps this sodden atmosphere
'Tween Glory and Despair.
And thou art basking in the mellow light
Of Cynthia's eyes: her sweet enchantment reigns.
Ah! no! 'tis broken by the flickering light
Of yonder taper, which the watcher marks,
Not yet embosomed in the arms of Sleep;
And Night's deep noon, when silence should pre-
vail,
Hath here and there a crack upon the air
Of its repose, that frets thy soul with pain.
The gondolier, to ease his weary task,
Keeps time and melody, and speeds away.
The bravo creeps abroad on yonder point,
To rifle Silence and to murder Peace;
While reckless Passion with Despair's afloat,
And Treach'ry's at the helm. And, like a rat,
Ingratitude is gnawing at thy life.
O Venice, thou art blessed, as well as cursed!
Mine own estate with thee and with the night,
May fairly stand and balance sympathy;
The mellow light of my humanity
Lies shattered by the hand of Treachery.
I loved thee, Venice! Yea, I loved thee well!
When thou held out thine arms to take me in,
I had but love, ambition, honesty,
And that fair pride which Nature gave to me.
They were my all, and wealth they were to me:

I held to them, just as the miser held
To every coin which Death alone could free.
I sought no enterprise, no cunning used
To gain advantage of my origin ;
And not ashamed of that, I stood as free
As any man in Venice. What have I
Remaining to my credit, to remove
Beyond the bounds of Venice ? Let me think !
I have that love, that honesty and pride,
As unsubdued as ever : but, my heart —
My heart is cut down like a blighted rose ;
Its glory lost, a wreck is all that stays.
My heart is sinking, sinking, sinking down, —
As lead the line which the mariner pays out,
Till, resting on the deep bed of the sea,
Beyond the eye of man, it finds repose.
And my ambition — *Immortality !* —
That which all high-souled men are aiming for,
Is by my adverse fortune cast away
Upon an unknown and unfathomed sea.
And now, my only aim is in the tomb,
Where Silence and Oblivion undisturbed
May watch with me forever.
Venice ! Venice ! farewell, farewell, farewell !

[Picture — *The Farewell to Venice.*]

ACT V.

SCENE.—VERONA.

“ With God and silence !
When the great Universe subsides in God,
Even as a moment’s foam subsides again
Upon the wave that bears it.”

ALEXANDER SMITH.

ACT V.

SCENE.—VERONA.

SCENE I.—*The Square in Verona (as in Act I., Scene III.)*

Enter CORIELLI followed by MORTO.

MORTO.

WHITHER would you, lady?

CORIELLI.

Into my grave,
For there my miserable life would end !

MORTO.

I pray you, take some rest !

CORIELLI.

Rest! rest! — for me ?
There is nor rest, nor solitude, nor sleep,
Can shield me from the sun that heats my blood,—
From my poor stricken and forsaken heart.
The very air is full of mockery !

'Tis peopled by a multitude of forms
 Revolting and obnoxious to my soul.
 The earth divides, and shows a seething mass
 Of rotten carcases, that move about
 With flesh in masses dropping from their bones.
 Some beckon me; some laugh at my despair;
 And lightning flashes hurry through my brain
 In excellent confusion. Let me go!
 I am not mad! not mad!

MORTO.

Whither would you?
 To other lands?

CORIELLI.

Why to other lands? No!
 There is no land can save me from myself;
 No crag will hide the mountain of my woe,
 Nor ocean drown my sorrow or my fears.
 The fountain of my tears is out of tune;
 It cannot answer to my soul's appeal.
 My heart is broiling in a cloud of fire—
 Maddening! maddening! aye, maddening!

MORTO.

Your grief will drive you mad!

CORIELLI.

Mad! mad! aye, mad!
 And yet, does madness e'er forget itself?

Wanders it to reason ; thence back again
To its own hell ?

Last night, methought, I was at home again,
The wife of him I loved ; and I was proud,
Rejoicing in mine husband as he held
My willing form within his strong embrace.
His loving words sank deep into my soul ;
His honeyed kisses lingered on my lips
Like nectar from the gods, — O balmy sweets !
And what a loving wife was I to him !
Dissolving every perfume in my way,
To make it sweeter and more rare for him ;
And every opposition that I saw
Confronting his advance, I put aside
By love's kind offices : when the path was clear
Then I rejoiced with him.
His bosom was my pillow in the night,
My refuge in the day. He was the sun,
That brought the daylight to my childish heart.
Our home was cheerful, charming, and at peace.
He went not from its threshold, or my side,
Without my kiss to keep his company ;
And my best prayers for his safe return
Were told as fast as tongue of love could tell.
And when the footfall of my love I heard,
If he escaped my watching and desire,
My heart would start to leap into his arms,
And by a welcome kiss receive him home.
And many things, which in themselves were small,

We each possessed the other; and though small
They counted in the total of our love.
That was my picture, was my paradise.
Ah! but it faded, and at last dissolved!
I saw him wedded to another wife,—
And he was kind to her — it made *me* mad!
He bent to her — kissed her — aye, *kissed* her!
My eagle-penetration went into
The dull indifference of her senses
To see if love was there. There was a mass
Of feathered vanity and swollen pride,
But neither substance, shadow, nor intent
Of what's akin to love.
And yet she smiled, and kissed — as Judas did,
When pocketing the price of that great Love
He was betraying. Then I could not weep,
A demon frenzy raged within my blood,
And Hatred's huge proportions brought about
The devil in mine heart; and Murder stood,
To blot forever from the living world
Myself and him and her. “Mercy!” I cried,
And, “Save me! save me! save me from my-
self!”

[Runs off, followed by Morto.

Enter GIORGIO and ARETINO.

ARETINO.

Brother, we need some rest! Here, for the night
Make we our quarters. Our necessities

Can be supplied in yonder hostelry.
This day's long journey, and to-morrow's march,
Advises a renewal of our strength
By food and shelter, and a peaceful night.

GIORGIO.

It cannot be that Peace will come again
And anchor me to hope! to life! to love!
My weary soul my body's burden feels,
And longs to cast it off. The lamp of life,
With a flickering and uncertain light,
Trembles to expire: I would die quickly!

ARETINO.

Courage, my brother! there's another love
Which thou art bound to feel — thy fellow-man.
He claims a debt of thee which must be paid.
Man was not made to live for self alone,
But for God's honor and the public good;
And he that fails to satisfy these debts,
Deserves especial scorn; for he murders
The design of his creation — and insults
The majesty of Heaven by default.

GIORGIO.

I cannot feel, I cannot think, or say
What gratitude I owe, or how to pay
My just indebtedness. I am afloat,
The sport of adverse winds; and to my doom

I sail unconsciously. I'm like the seed,
That which the mother-thistle sent abroad,
Its destiny unchosen and unknown.
My best endeavors soon will disappear,
And then forever ; — like a ship at sea
Striking a reef unknown upon the chart,
And going down with its cargo in the deep
To rest in darkness, its sad end unknown.
I'm like a weed that's growing with the wheat,
Which for the common good had better be
Upriven from the soil. My crowning aim,
To rise above the crowd of common men
And gain a brighter color to my name,
Is now a passing dream, a fading thought.
I am cut down to wither, fade, and die.

ARETINO.

It is unmanly, and of no avail,
This present grief. To be cast down
Shows we are human ; but to level fate
And conquer wisely our adversities
Establishes a power and exalts,
And would not shame the gods.
Look, my brother, and let me preach to you !
How grand Apollo manages his steeds
That mount the arch of heaven,— how his lust
Pursues the gentle, modest, flying Morn,
Who seeks to save her sweet virginity.
But, mark ! the Clouds assemble in their might,

Rebellion at their front, resolved on war
To keep his glory from the universe.
Success attends their onset for a while ;
Defeat soon follows, when they scamper off
And leave the conqueror to keep his course,
And set his glory in the glowing west.
Alike thy gloom is deep and desperate,
And master of thy manhood ; it but needs
Thy judgment to destroy it, to advance
More glorious from the conflict.

GIORGIO.

And for what
Would I have issue from my deep despair ?
I have no hope, now that I am cast off —
No hope that I again may mix with men ;
But my desire now is to be left alone
In quiet all my days, that I may nurse
My fond remembrance — may forget my grief
In meditation and sublimity.

ARETINO.

Hope, my brother, is man's best comforter !
Mortality is poor, but poorer yet
When hope is conquered by adversity.
Hope makes us brave the dangers of this life ;
It makes our enterprise advance ; it keeps
Defeat far in the distance ; and it comes
With balm for every accident and fear

That mars the sunshine of our journeyings.
 Hope makes our passage to another world
 Devoid of terror ; it consoles the heart
 That is relying on the promises
 Of Heaven's King.
 Then hope, my brother, hope that all is well !

GIORGIO.

Thy counsel touches me. I know thy love.
 But, look ! this is the place, the very spot,
 Where we encountered those two noble men,
 Bellini and Bartolo !

ARETINO.

'Tis the place ;
 But let us enter here, and seek repose.

GIORGIO.

My gratitude to them will never, never die !

[*Exeunt into the hostelry.*

Enter VIOLANTA and ATTENDANT.

VIOLANTA.

Thus far, with certainty, I follow them,
 Giorgione and my brother. Though their speed
 Hath been intemperate,
 I must into their presence quickly come
 Within the city.

(To ATTENDANT.)

Seek information —

What you may deem sufficient for our need.

[*Exit Attendant.*

I do repent my folly — villainy.

Could I retrace my steps I would, and speedily ;

But by retraction I proclaim my sin

And shoulder public scorn. The mark of Cain

Would sit upon my brow — would thence proclaim

My deep and unpaired sin. I must advance,

And prosper in my crime, or turn aside

To fall into the abyss of my guilt

And sink forever. There 's no back way, no,

Nor resting-place ; I must advance and win.

[*Exit into the hostelry.*

SCENE II.—*A Sleeping Room in the Hostelry. Night.*
GIORGIO discovered asleep on a Bed.

Enter CORIELLI (with a dagger in her hand).

CORIELLI.

I HAVE the means to end this weary life,—
To blot out reason, and to purchase peace—
Forever. Forever! Why shudder I?
As if “forever” was a frozen hand
Dropped in the caldron of my heated blood!
I stand in awe, and contemplate the deed
That I would compass by this piece of steel!
I'll take thee to my bosom as a friend;
I'll honor thee, if thou wilt let my blood
And quiet all my fears, my doubts, my life.
Come, then, good steel, and do thy bloody work!

[She raises the dagger to stab herself, when Giorgio, speaking in his dream, arrests her attention.

GIORGIO (*dreaming*).

Corielli! O Corielli!

CORIELLI.

Who calls Corielli?

I am Corielli; and my purpose halts
To answer thee.

GIORGIO (*dreaming*).

Corielli! my sweet — sweet —

CORIELLI.

I know that voice! It is of one once dear,
One that was fondly loved in better days.

GIORGIO (*dreaming*).

Corielli! my Corielli!

CORIELLI.

I am here.

Whate'er thou art, spirit of good or ill,
Man or demon, Corielli comes to thee.

[*She approaches the bed and sees Giorgio.*

GIORGIO (*dreaming*).

Corielli!

CORIELLI (*wildly*).

I have thee in my power!

[*Laughs hysterically.*

My great revenge can now be satisfied.
Aye, every drop of thy warm blood must flow
To satiate the thirst of my revenge!
Thou murder'dst me, by killing all my love;

I murder thee, to kill thy foul desire.
 I'll have thy company to a solid sleep,
 Lasting forever. Come! I'll follow thee!

[*She leans over him, and is about to strike, when Giorgio again speaks in his dream, and she hesitates.*

GIORGIO.

No, no, my sweetheart! My sweet Corielli!

CORIELLI.

The same old voice! the well-remembered words!
 I am not dead, forgotten, or denied.
 No, no, he dreams of me, he dreams of me.
 Does he repent? would he return to me?
 I cannot strike my dagger to thy heart,
 For Heaven holds my hand, and shelters thee.

[*She drops the dagger.*
 My wrath is turned away. O let me go,
 And hide my head forever from the world!

[*Exit.*

GIORGINO (*awaking*).

Corielli! stay thy hand! stay, stay thy hand!
 [*Rises suddenly and comes forward terrified and alarmed.*
He looks about, and gradually regains consciousness.
 It was a dream! Yes, yes, it was a dream!
 Yet it appeared so real, so tangible,
 I could have touched her — felt the steel
 Drinking my blood! O am I yet awake?

My pulse throbs wildly, and the sweat pours down

In rivers from my brow. I must have air!

[*Discovers the dagger.*

What is this that glistens in the gloaming?

[*Picks it up.*

A dagger? dagger! she held a dagger!

Am I awake? or is it all a dream?

This dagger is substantial, and its point

[*Pricks himself.*

Touches my sensibility to pain,

While to its summons comes the crimson blood.

I am awake. This dagger needs some light

To set my mind at ease. I must have light!

What, ho! light! light!

[*Exit.*

Enter VIOLANTA.

VIOLANTA.

He lodges here to-night, so I am told.

I will advise him of my presence here.

Though conscious of my sin, I must enforce

My presence at his side. I cannot fly

From my deep sin; my conscience cannot sleep.

I am tormented, yet I must proceed.

Enter CORIELLI.

CORIELLI.

I cannot leave him till I have confessed

My faulty judgment and my senseless wrath.
 I'll show him how my heart is penitent,
 How weary of itself, how much it needs
 A separation and a silence sound
 From all its misery. Giorgio ! Giorgio !

VIOLENTA.

Of whom speak you ? and what is your desire ?

CORIELLI.

I spoke of Giorgio. Why dost thou intrude ?
 I had forgotten thee, and my despair,
 In my advance to him. Thou art a thief,
 Thou came into mine house and stole my love.
 My peace and resignation's in the purse
 Of thy rank rottenness. Why art thou here ?

VIOLENTA.

A woman —

CORIELLI.

No, no, no, thou art a fiend !
 Thou didst purloin my love, my reason, happiness ;
 And now thy evil presence interferes
 To hinder me from pleading, and to laugh
 And fatten on the wreck of my poor heart.
 Look upon me ! look on my misery !
 And then I must be paid for all my pain !

[She seizes Violanta by the throat.

Bring back my love ! I will have no denial !
 I'll tear thee into fragments small as dust
 And give them to the winds, if I shall find
 He is not in thine heart. I have thee fast !

[Violanta struggles to get free.

My grip — shall — never loose !

VIOLENTA.

Mercy ! mercy !

CORIELLI.

That mercy which I had I but return !
 I have thee fast, fast ! Bring back my love !
 [She strangles Violanta.
 Ha, ha, ha, ha ! fast, fast ! Bring back my love !
 [Wild and hysterical.

Enter GIORGIO, ARETINO, HOST, and others with lights.

GIORGIO.

Whom have we here ? Corielli ? Yes !

ARETINO.

My sister too !
 And strangled by Corielli !

CORIELLI.

Dead ! dead ! dead !

[Laughs wildly.

GIORGIO.

Let go thy hold, Corielli !

[Raises her.

HOST.

She is mad,
And hears thee not. She is responsible
For this most sad misfortune.

GIORGIO (*with CORIELLI on his arm*).

Pity, sirs,
But neither censure nor complain of her,
She is the child of fortune. If God wills
That this calamity should rest on her—
Her judgment gone, her reason out of joint—
Be ye more thankful that ye can commit
Your fears and love to Him. Poor, poor Corielli !

CORIELLI.

I am not mad! no, no, I am not mad!
I am not yet *asleep*! Why call me back?
Who keeps me from my purpose? let me go!
My blood's afire! burning, burning, burning!
And I *shall* have release. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

GIORGIO.

Look up, my sweet one! Look up, Corielli!
All is well.

CORIELLI.

No, not well! No, no, not well!
I killed her, Giorgio! I must follow her,
That at the Judgment she must not deny

The theft of my poor heart! O let me go!
 She tore thee from my heart; I — I killed her!
 I was alone — ha, ha, ha! — I am dying!
This was my agent. 'Tis a deadly draught!

[Shows vial.

ALL.

Poison!

CORIELLI.

Aye, poison! I killed thy mistress —
 Would have killed thyself. O forgive, forgive.

GIORGIO.

What mystery is here? I cannot see
 The meaning in thy words! I loved thyself;
 The only treasure in the world to me
 Was thy sweet heart and love.

CORIELLI.

Then I am guilty.
 Yes, I am guilty, O very guilty!
 My fury's my excuse. O pity me!
 The poison works! — O forgive, forgive!

[Dies. A pause

Enter MORTO DA FELTRI.

MORTO.

Aye, look upon thy victims, guilty wretch!
 Then add the weight of blood to thy black heart,
 For conscious sin will sink thy soul to hell.

Thy presence here contaminates the air
 With foul deformity and rotten love.
 I but perform my duty to these dead,
 When I the world do rid of such a rogue,
 Of such a rotten heart. This, then, from me !

[*Stabs Giorgio.*

GIORGIO (*falls*).

The purport of thy words I cannot understand ;
 But for this passage I would give to thee
 A world of thanks. 'Tis better that I die,
 Than live in sorrow and in constant pain.
 Give me thy hand — I would not pass away,
 And have it said that I had enemies
 Who knew me after death ; be my brother still.
 Aretino, my brother, I know thy love,
 And my soul thanks thee with my dying tongue.
 My last request, before I pass away
 Let me unfold — see it performed with care :
 When I am dead, bury me on the hills,
 Near by the stone which marks my father's grave ;
 But leave no mark to tell the place where I
 Repose in silence and in solitude,
 For I would sleep in undisturbed repose.
 Farewell, my brothers ! Corielli ! I come !

[*Dies.*

[*Picture — Death of Giorgione*

